

T H E M I S S I O N O F T H E C H U R C H

THE CONCEPTION
OF THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH IN EARLY REFORMED THEOLOGY,
WITH
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
CALVIN'S THEOLOGY AND PRACTISE IN GENEVA.

BY
WILLIAM H. CLARK, B.D.



"Soli Deo gloria."

"Nostri non sumus, Dei sumus."



C O N T E N T S

INTRODUCTORY SKETCH

An apologetic - typical answers as to the mission of the Church - the answer of Catholicism - Anglicanism - Kantian philosophy - Protestantism in general - scope of discussion pp. 1-25.

CHAPTER I

THE ESSENCE OF THE CHURCH

Historical development of the idea of the Church - sources of Calvin's theology - the mediaeval Church - the pre-Reformers - Luther - Zwingli - Bucer - Calvin's conception of the essence of the Church - marks of the true Church - visible and invisible Church - institution and fellowship - the individual and the Church - "Extra ecclesiam nulla salus" - the Church and the Kingdom - pp.26-71.

CHAPTER II

THE PRIMARY MISSION OF THE CHURCH

Preaching of the word of God - Calvin's conception of the word - sacraments - the Church as a school - the glory of God - implications and appraisal - narrow and broad conceptions of mission of Church pp.72-99.

CHAPTER III

THE CHURCH AND THE LIFE OF THIS PRESENT WORLD

Alleged asceticism of Calvinistic piety - Catholic and Anabaptist asceticism - Lutheran negativism - real nature of Calvinistic piety - intramundane, telic-oriented, Bibliocentric ... pp.100-129

CHAPTER IV

THE CHURCH AND THE POLITICAL SPHERE

Contemporary conditions - pre-Calvinistic Geneva - relation of Church and State - functions of State - principle of spiritual autonomy - relation of Calvin's theory and practise - theocracy (a Bibliocracy), Calvin's primary ideal - separatism, a subsidiary ideal - adaptability of Calvinism pp. 130-200.

CHAPTER V

THE CHURCH AND THE POLITICAL SPHERE (Cont.)

Sanctions of Bibliocracy - preaching of the word - discipline - prayer - advice and censure - legislation -- submission and resistance - peace and internationalism - Calvinism and democracy (sources, nature, subsequent influence)..... pp. 201-262.

CHAPTER VI

THE CHURCH AND THE MORAL SPHERE

Church discipline - sources - theory - purpose - agent - subjects of discipline - practise - appraisal - effects.... pp. 263-317.

CHAPTER VII

THE CHURCH AND THE SOCIAL-ETHICAL SPHERE (Cont.)

Benevolence and social reform - social character of Calvinism - the diaconate - Calvinism and the family and sexual ethic - missions - church union - Calvinism and education - a trained ministry, an educated citizenry..... pp. 318-358.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CHURCH AND THE ECONOMIC SPHERE

Interaction of religious and economic factors - congeniality of Calvinism with industrial and commercial development of modern world - basis of latter in ethico-religious spirit of Calvinism - ethic of vocation - predestination and perseverance - force of Genevan circumstances - deliverance from "pedantic prohibitions" of mediaevalism - economic ethic at work in Geneva - restraints of Christian stewardship and communal responsibility - religious basis of Calvinistic economic ethic pp. 359-391.

CONCLUSION

Sovereignty of God, the central message of Calvinism - obedience and righteousness - know God, do His will - service for the honour of God - the glory of Calvinism pp. 392-407.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

- | | |
|--|--|
| Calvin Translation
Society (Beveridge) | (Calvin's) Institutes of the Christian Religion. I, II, Edinburgh, 1845; III, 1846. |
| Calvin Translation
Society (Beveridge) | (Calvin's) Tracts Relating to the Reformation, I (1844), II (1849), III (1851), Edinburgh. |
| Calvin Translation
Society | (Calvin's) Commentaries. |
| Bonnet | Letters of John Calvin. I, II, Edinburgh, 1855; III, IV, Philadelphia, 1858. |
| Troeltsch | Die Soziallehren der christlichen Kirche. Tübingen, 1912. |
| Troeltsch (Montgomery's
Translation) | Protestantism and Progress. London, 1912. |
| Doumergue, Lang, Ba-
vinck, Warfield | Calvin and the Reformation. New York, 1909. |
| Bohatec, Hollweg, Kol-
fhaus, Neuenhaus,
Strathmann, Werder-
mann | Calvinstudien. Leipzig, 1909. |
| Lang..... | Reformation und Gegenwart. Detmold, 1918. |
| Rieker..... | Grundsätze Reformierter Kirchenverfassung. Leipzig, 1899. |
| Wernle..... | Der Evangelische Glaube (Bd. IV, Calvin). Tübingen, 1919. |
| Seeberg..... | Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte (Bd. IV). Leipzig, 1920. |
| Rade..... | Glaubenslehre (Bd. I). Gotha-Stuttgart, 1924. |
| Hunter (A. M.)..... | The Teaching of Calvin. Glasgow, 1920. |
| Reyburn..... | John Calvin. London, 1914. |

Walker.....	John Calvin. New York, 1906.
Lindsay.....	A History of the Reformation (Vol. II). Edinburgh, 1908.
Henry (Stebbing's Trans- lation)	Life and Times of Calvin. I, II, London, 1849.
Dyer.....	The Life of John Calvin. London, 1850.
Troeltsch.....	Calvin and Calvinism. Hibbert Journal, Vol. viii. Oct. 1909. London (1910).
Forsyth.....	Calvinism and Capitalism. Contemporary Review. Vol. xcvi. June, 1910.
Foster.....	Geneva Before Calvin. American Historical Review, viii. Jan. 1903. New York.
Foster.....	Liberal Calvinism. Harvard Theological Review, Vol. xvi. No. 1. Jan. 1923.
Doumergue.....	Music in the Work of Calvin. Princeton Theological Review, vii. 1909.
Warfield.....	Calvin's Doctrine of God. Princeton Theo- logical Review, vii, 1909.
McGiffert.....	Protestant Thought Before Kant. London, 1919.
Fairbairn.....	Calvin and the Reformed Church (in Cambridge Modern History). Vol. II, Ch. XI. Cam- bridge, 1903.
Kuyper.....	Calvinism. Amsterdam, 1899.
Penning (Berrington's Translation)	Life and Times of Calvin. London, 1912.
Leckie.....	The Vocation of the Church. London, 1924.
Oman.....	The Church and the Divine Order. London, 1911.
Ruffini (Heyes' Trans- lation)	Religious Liberty. London, 1912.
Fremantle.....	The World as the Subject of Redemption. London, 1885.
Doumergue.....	Jean Calvin, les Hommes, et les Choses de son Temps. I (1899), II (1902), ^{III (1925)} Lau- sanne.

Calvini Opera..... (Corpus Reformationum), edited by Baum,
Cunitz, and Reuss. Strassburg, 1863.

SUBSIDIARY SOURCES.

Tulloch.....	Leaders of the Reformation. Edinburgh, 1859.
Schaff.....	The Creeds of Christendom. I, III, (1878), II (1877), New York.
Stähelin.....	Calvin, Leben und ausgewählte Schriften. I, II, Elberfeld, 1863.
Kampschulte.....	Calvin, Seine Kirche und Sein Staat in Genf. Leipzig, 1869.
Schaff.....	History of the Christian Church. Edin- burgh, 1893.
Horne.....	Calvin in His Letters (Mansfield College Essays). London, 1909.
Gore.....	The Mission of the Church. London, 1892.
Gore.....	The Holy Spirit and the Church. London, 1924.
Dickie.....	The Fundamental Principles of the Reformed Conception of the Church. Aberdeen, 1924.
Menzies.....	A Study of Calvin and Other Papers (London, 1918).
Hume Brown.....	Life of Knox. London, 1895.
Falconer.....	The Unfinished Symphony. London, 1909.
Hunter (Sylvester)....	Outlines of Dogmatic Theology. I, London, 1895.
Denzinger-Bannwart....	Enchiridion Symbolorum et Definitionum. Friburgi Brisgoviae, 1922.
Ritschl.....	The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation. Translated. Edin- burgh, 1872.
Hastie.....	Theology of the Reformed Churches. Edin- burgh, 1904.

INTRODUCTORY SKETCH

The Church never sees inside the world where men live, the world where helpless wretches are mere cogs in a soulless machine of economic oppression, the world where people are pawns and mammon is king, the world where the youth of all lands is flung away as cannon fodder to satisfy the whim of a king or dictator, a capitalist or the proletariat. The Church passes by on the other side without a word of guidance or inspiration. The Church cares for creed and liturgy; the Church is concerned with saving individual men from a future punishment; it sees not the needs of men. The Church is satisfied to preach the word and administer the sacraments; it never sees inside the world where men live.

How common it is that men thus reproach the Christian Church. But such an indictment could never have been drawn up against the Church of Calvin. Not that the Reformer turned politician or economist. Far from it! On the contrary he was preeminently, almost exclusively, a religious Reformer. Yet according to him the Church of Christ must have a message for every sphere of life. Where men live and toil and grieve, there the Church must be to inspire, yes, even to direct the

currents of life. The Divine Purpose extends not only to the individual, but to the family, the school, the State, even to the social and economic order. The Church is to make men conscious of this purpose. The Church is to insist that the will of God is to be wrought out in every sphere of life, and that it is up to Christian men to see that this is done. But we are unduly anticipating the answer to our question.

What is the mission of the Church? Strange that so simple and fundamental a question should to such an extent have been ignored. One would think it so natural a query that by this time there would be naught left of novelty to be explored. Yet if an apologetic be needed to justify an attempt to answer it, one has but to ponder this fact: take up any typical textbook on theology, and one will find a hundred pages dealing with the institution of the Church, its history, its sacraments, its ritual, its polity, with at most a few paragraphs as to its end, its vocation, its ideals. Undoubtedly the latter are more or less vaguely held in mind. It is naturally taken for granted that the primary mission of the Church is to bring the Gospel of Christ to bear on the lives of individual men that they may experience the redemption wrought in their behalf on Calvary. Men normally agree that this is the primary vocation of the Church. But is this the sum of the Church's duty to God and man? Is the Church to be content to snatch "brands from the burning"? Has it not an ethical mission as well, and, if so, is this to be accomplished solely through the instrumentality of regenerated individuals? Or at the other extreme should the Church consciously seek to establish a

Christian social order? The Church exists to bring in the Kingdom of God, we say. Yes, but the Kingdom is both a gift and a program, the work of God and man. What is the relation of the Church to the Kingdom?

There has been but little precision in the treatment with which theologians have handled this question, and a lamentable haziness in the minds of Christians at large, both induced by and resulting in unworthy conceptions of the Church. There has in fact been a disproportionate consideration of the genesis and nature of the Church, too little of its ideals, its mission, its goal.

Leckie, in his recent volume, "The Vocation of the Church" has treated the problem from a general historical and theological point of view. Bishop Gore has done the same for the Anglican High-church party in his little volume, "The Mission of the Church." Oman has incidentally touched the problem in his "Church and the Divine Order." By and large, however, the subject is as yet a virgin field. Especially is this true when one considers the answer to the problem from the point of view of specific historical periods. The subject of the present thesis has been chosen because of the conviction that a study of the ideals of the Church as expressed in early Reformed Theology is of basic importance as we grapple with the problem to-day.

It may serve to clarify the discussion if we briefly sketch the typical answers which have been given to the query, what is the mission of the Church? In the first instance we

shall inquire as to the prevailing theory of the Roman Catholic Church.* Bellarmine's well known definition of the Church may safely be regarded as the authoritative Catholic dogma. The Church is "a body of men united together for profession of the same faith and by participation in the same sacraments, under the governance of lawful pastors, more especially of the Roman pontiff, the sole vicar of Christ on earth."** The Church is a visible, hierarchical institution, founded by Christ for the salvation of men. It is distinguished by the marks of unity, apostolicity, holiness and catholicity; its mission is world-wide; its task is to perpetuate the work of Christ in the world, as indicated by His words: "As my Father hath sent Me, I also send you." As such the Church is a supernatural society "inasmuch as its end is something above nature: understanding by nature that which is required by the constitution of man, of body and soul.... But the actual destiny prepared for man is something higher than this, being the sight of God, called the Beatific Vision; and the end for which the Church is established is to assist man to lead a holy life on the earth, and by so doing to attain to his eternal end."*** Side by side with the

* V. Sylvester Hunter, "Outlines of Dogmatic Theology," Vol. I; Denzinger-Bannwart, *Enchiridion Symbolorum et Definitionum*; Thurston, article on "Church" (Catholic) Hastings, "E.R.E."

** Thurston, 627.

*** S. Hunter, 248.

Church exist two other societies, the family and the State, each independent in its own sphere. Yet if a clash should come between these societies, the Church is to be preferred because its end is the most important, as it is "mainly attained beyond the grave, and concerns eternity."*

According to Catholic teaching the end of man is the supernatural possession of God, and the only place where this end can be attained is in the supernatural society which we know as the Church of God, "extra ecclesiam nullus omnino salvatur" (no one whatever is saved).** In fact the Church is the veritable Kingdom of God, and as such is in a sense an end in itself. Moreover the Church is in effect a reincarnation of Christ. Its task is to carry on His three-fold work of Prophet, Priest and King. To that end it is in possession of the special supernatural direction of the Holy Spirit, which renders it the unerring guide of all the faithful.

* Ibid. 250 f. According to the interpretation of Catholic teaching given by both Thurston and Hunter this preeminence of the Church over the State merely implies that where there is a clear conflict of duties, the spiritual is to be preferred to the temporal. Ordinarily there will be no such conflict for the interests of the two societies are quite different. Of course as a matter of practise the chief difficulty has been that the Pope has officially claimed certain temporal powers as well, ostensibly in order to provide himself immunity from civil interference, but all too often as an excuse for personal or ecclesiastical aggrandisement at the expense of the State. Cp. "Syllabus of Errors" Nos. 55, 75, 76.

** Fourth Lateran Council under Innocent III, (1215), Denzinger, 189. Hunter insists that this must be interpreted alongside other pronouncements of the same Pope and the encyclicals of Pope Pius IX "who teaches that God in His goodness cannot

The Church possesses the authority to teach, and as Teacher is constituted by the Bishops united with the Roman Pontiff. The possession of the Holy Spirit certifies that its teaching is infallible in all matters of faith and morals. The Church likewise shares the kingly office of its Lord, in that it is independent of all earthly control, and in its hierarchy established by Christ possesses a sacred form of government by which it rules its members. Most important of all the Church as Priest not only proclaims the redemption wrought by Christ, but continually applies its benefits to men through the ministry of the sacraments. The sacraments it regards as "the principal means by which the merits of the death of Christ are applied to individuals."* In the Church alone does the individual partake of divine grace, so that he may attain his supernatural end, the Beatific Vision.

It should of course be recognised that the Catholic Church in the person of its saints has been characterised by much true benevolence, Christian charity and a genuine love for humanity. It was the Church which helped to sound the knell of slavery in the ancient world, and as Lord Morley phrases it, "it was the Churchmen who kept the flickering light of civilisation alive amid the raging storms of uncontrolled passion and violence."**

allow anyone to pass to eternal punishment who is not guilty of some wilful fault" S. Hunter, 255.

* S. Hunter, 254.

** Morley, "Voltaire", pp. 322, quoted Leckie, 245.

Thus incidentally, but none the less materially, Catholicism proved itself the anchor of mediaeval civilisation and made a vital contribution to the social and ethical progress of mankind. In fact, it is still the avowed teaching of the Church that the better a Catholic, the better a citizen, and that one of the chief means by which the believer may work out his supernatural end is by the service of God in the person of his fellow men.

Yet even the most cursory glance at Church History convinces one that in practise there likewise existed a conscious grasping for worldly power and glory on the part of the hierarchy. This worldliness is no more to be denied than the incidental, but none the less valuable service of the Church in promoting the general progress of mankind. Yet none the less the predominant note of Catholicism is and always has been otherworldliness, and the asceticism which it has fostered has concerned itself almost entirely with the preparation of the soul to attain the Beatific Vision. The Church is essentially the divinely appointed channel through which God works to prepare men for the possession and enjoyment of Himself in heaven.

Anglicanism affords a via media between the Catholic and Protestant conceptions of the mission of the Church. As interpreted by Bishop Gore in his little volume "The Mission of the Church," the conception of the Anglican communion more nearly approximates the Roman view, with the omission of some of the latter's exclusiveness, and with a greater variety of religious expression. As the Father hath sent Christ into the world on

His prophetic, priestly, kingly mission, so in like manner the Master has commissioned His Church, which is to perpetuate His work. As Prophet she continually proclaims the truth involved in the person of the Redeemer. As Priest she applies to men the gifts of divine grace, and according to their needs dispenses to them the bread of life. As King she rules over all her members, "to discipline, to guide, to strengthen, till this human life of ours is brought, in all its parts and capacities, into the obedience of Christ."*

The Church which is the possessor of such a divine commission is an organised visible society, certified and guaranteed, not solely by the marks of word and sacraments, as in the case of the Lutheran and Reformed communions, but more especially by the apostolic succession of her ministers. Thus and thus alone is its corporate continuity assured. This principle maintains "that no man in the Church can validly exercise any ministry, except such as he has received from a source running back ultimately to the apostles, so that any ministry which a person takes upon himself to exercise, which is not covered by an apostolically received commission, is invalid."**

* Gore, "Mission of the Church," p.7.

** Ibid. p.31. When this specific claim was made by the Catholic Church of Calvin's day the redoubtable Reformer was not for an instant intimidated by "this smoke of succession" as a necessary guarantee of the true Church. Such a succession, so he averred, has been interrupted not only mechanically but by the character of the men ordained, which had certainly not been above reproach. In substance he maintained that apostolic succession is an empty formula, a meaningless arbitrary fiction unless the ministers of the Church are true to Christ. Cp. "On the Necessity of Reform-

This Church is the home in which the gifts of the Spirit are dispensed; in it Christ has deliberately enshrined His truth; in it spiritual gifts are distributed through the visible channels of the sacraments. The Church is the home of the Spirit, and it appears from the New Testament that the gift of the Spirit is given only in the Church. In the Church alone are men entitled to find that sonship of God for which they were created, and that brotherhood so essential to the life of humanity, actually realised. In fact according to the New Testament the covenant of salvation on Christ's express authority is offered to men in the Church.*

Fellowship with God is not won or maintained singly, but only in the fellowship of men, and in recognition of the obligation of membership. "We may take it for truth, then, that as represented in the New Testament, the New Covenant, like the old, is with the Community, not with separated individuals and that Christianity from the beginning was the religion of a sacramental Church."**

ing the Church," Tracts, Vol.I, p.170 ff. "Letter to Sadoletto," Ibid. p.52.

* Gore, Ibid. 6 f, 67, and "Holy Spirit and the Church," p.16, 20, 115.

** "Holy Spirit and the Church," p.146.

Bishop Gore would heartily concur with the words of Darwell Stone that the ministry of the Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches "affords the possibility of that complete sacramental system which is the covenanted means of the union of Christians with the Lord and Head of the Church It is "the home of sanctification."*

In opposition to the sect ideal (undenominationalism) that individuals first become Christians and then voluntarily organise themselves into Christian societies, Anglicanism upholds the Church ideal "that men become Christians, in the first instance by incorporation into the one Christian society, and then, after that, are bound to realise individually their Christian privileges."** For the early Church being a Christian was not merely holding a certain set of doctrines, but rather meant being within the apostolic society. This is not to confine the Spirit of God, and to deny that He may work outside of the covenanted sphere and the means of grace, but it is to assert that God has promised to work in the Church and through the means of grace, that ordinarily He does not bestow His grace in any other way, and that dependence upon such extra-ecclesia operation of the Spirit is distinctly precarious. Likewise Anglicanism protests against the exclusive claim of Rome and characterises Catholicism as a one-sided development of Christianity. Certain doctrinal elements, particularly as regards the infallibility of the Pope and

* Hasting's "E.R.E." Article on Church (Anglican).

** Gore, "M. of Ch." p.22, Cp.16 f.

the Immaculate Conception, it views with suspicion , considering them untenable and historically unsound, and maintains that Rome is not and never can be the whole of Christianity. The Anglican Church, according to Bishop Gore, has retained the ancient structure of creeds, canon, sacraments and hierarchy, while none the less asserting freedom of historical criticism, the duty of private judgment and the appeal to the Scriptures.*

The Church is of overshadowing importance in the purpose of God for the salvation of men. It exists, as Bishop Gore phrases it, "for no other purpose than to minister to the spiritual union of man with God."** It is to continually reinterpret and reapply with divine sanction the religious and moral law of its Lord to the varying needs and circumstances of its life, to inform and educate the consciences of its members, and to bring to them the fullness of the blessings included in Christ's redemption. Assigned such a lofty commission it is the duty of Christians to do all in their power to render the Church amenable to the divine purpose.

* Ibid. 33 f.

** Ibid. p. 11. Though at present there is a movement for the disestablishment of the Church of England, in the main the Church has insisted on a recognition by the State of its national position, and has worked with the State for the application of the principles of Christian morality to all men within the commonwealth.

The view outlined above is of course that of the High-church party which lays a predominant emphasis upon the ecclesiastical, sacerdotal and sacramental principle. As such it has been outlined in more detail because, as viewed for our purpose, it is a more distinctive conception. The Evangelical or Low-church party conforms more nearly to the view of the Protestant churches in general, while the Broad-church party emphasizes the promotion of true Christian living as the one purpose of the Church, and as the one criterion by which all doctrine, ritual and ceremonies are to be judged. Though this latter view is associated with specific historical and ecclesiastical relationships foreign to Kant, it is apparent that there are distinct points of resemblance between this theory and the Kantian conception of the Church as an ethical society to insure the moral improvement of men.

Another well-defined school of opinion as regards the mission of the Church is that represented by Immanuel Kant.*

* V. Kemp-Smith's Commentary on Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason," Abbott's translation of Kant's, "On the Radical Evil in Human Nature," Paulsen's "Immanuel Kant, His Life and Doctrine", especially Section III dealing with Kant's theory of religion and the Church, based on Kant's "Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft." Cp. also article, "Kant" in Hastings's "E.R.E." by Ernst Troeltsch.

According to the German philosopher, Nature herself provides all the equipment that is necessary for the full enjoyment of human rights. From this standpoint he "adduces as the two-fold sufficient inspiration to the rigours and sublimities of the spiritual life, the starry heavens above and the moral law within. They are ever present influences on the life of man. The naked eye reveals the former; of the latter all men are immediately aware. In their universal appeal they are of the very substance of human existence."* The philosopher's celebrated postulate of the categorical imperative is the expression of this inward moral law, the determining factor at the basis of human action. Its demands are unconditional and absolute, binding upon man regardless of consequences, and involving ipso facto the surety that their fulfillment is possible. Hence the freedom of the will is also a necessary postulate. "Thou canst for thou oughtest"; this is the challenge. Man knows that he cannot be better except with the change of his entire nature. Duty commands this, and duty commands nothing that is not practical for us.**

* Smith, Introduction, lviii.

** V. Abbott p. 356.

One is reminded of the words of Emerson:

"So high is grandeur to our dust,
So near is God to man.
When Duty whispers low, Thou must,
The youth replies, I can."

"Universality is the touchstone through which the rational origin of the will's motives may be infallibly recognised. If the maxim of the will cannot be represented as a universal law, it is not derived from reason, but from sensibility, and the resulting act is without moral value, or non-moral. One may accordingly express the categorical imperative in the formula: act so that thy maxim may be capable of becoming the universal natural law of all rational beings."* It is in the recognition of this unequivocal moral law that man attains his true dignity; it is this which constitutes the link binding man to his fellows. Beyond the realm of nature with all its contradictions Kant postulates immortality and a divine universal order with which realm man's moral nature is in contact.

This conception of the categorical imperative and of man's ability to act according to the demands of his moral nature naturally had far-reaching effect upon Kant's conception of morality, religion and the Church. Moreover, ^{the}ecclesiastical serfdom of his day blinded him to a full appreciation of the religious life of the German Church. The hollowness of its pretensions estranged his sympathies. He was disgusted at the fact that it was a mere tool of the absolutist State, that it emphasised the statutory rather than the moral, submission to its dictation as to creed, polity and ceremonies rather than zeal to further upright living. Kant would recall the German Church to the Reformation, which he characterised as a sincere attempt to free the Church from perversions, "What Jesus really accomplished was to found the invisible Church as an ethical

* Paulsen, 306.

community of all God's true children upon the earth. The spirit of original Christianity is found in a purely moral and rational faith, in a pure life devoted to God and one's neighbours as the only divine service."* The Church, as the representative on earth of the Kingdom of God, is an ethical community under the moral law, "The value as well as the truth of religion is to be estimated according to a moral standard. Churches and Church doctrine have value only because, and in so far as, they are serviceable for the moral education of the human race The only true divine service is leading a good life."** The members of this Church should live in close communion, because they one and all submit themselves to the will of God. Historically, the community appears in visible form and finds necessary a system of professional teachers, creeds, ceremonies, holy books, etc. The ultimate purpose of all these helps, however, so Kant avers, is simply "that pure religion shall by degrees be finally freed from all empirical motives, and from all ordinances which have merely an historical basis so that at last the pure religion of reason may prevail universally."***

Kant's conception is purely one of moral rationalism. His rule of faith is the moral law within, not the Church, not the Bible as the expressed will of God. Indeed the truth of revelation itself is to be tested by its harmony with the moral law.

* Paulsen, 366.

** Paulsen, 363 f.

*** Ibid. 365.

Only that which is significant for man's ethical development is to be tolerated in the Church. Political or priestly power is to be rejected and even creeds, ceremonies and forms of worship to be endured as temporary aids alone. The Church exists for no other function than to enable men in fellowship with one another to follow out the behests of the categorical imperative. Freed from State control and the tyranny of priestcraft, the true Church seeks to enable men to attain the ideal of moral perfection exhibited in Jesus. In fact the conclusion is that "the function of religion is not to subject the will or the understanding to any powers of this world or the other, but only to strengthen it as the power to will the good."* Religion is thus emasculated to the level of morality, and the Church becomes an ethical society for mutual self-improvement through obedience to the moral law.

It may be objected that the Kantian ideal was too exclusively philosophical and intellectual ever to have possessed a popular appeal or to have exerted a wide influence. Kemp-Smith reminds us that Kant himself accepted the current Leibnizian view "that human excellence consists in intellectual enlightenment, and that it is therefore reserved for the élite, those privileged with the leisure and endowed with the special abilities required for its enjoyment." However, his views as to the existence of such an intellectual aristocracy later became modified through the influence of Rousseau. Indeed Kant came to recognise man as an end in himself and as possessing worth ir-

* Quoted Paulsen, 372.

respective of social position. "Rousseau has set me right I learn to honour men, and should regard myself as of much less use than the common labourer, if I did not believe that my philosophy will restore to all men the common rights of humanity," (rights, however, which Kant interpreted in an individualistic manner).^{*} This recognition of a broader humanitarian outlook and his espousal of the cause of the French Revolution secured for his ideal a measure of popular support which otherwise would not have been attained. Kant did help to wed intellectual integrity to Christian ethics.

The conception of the Church as an ethical society has of course been especially prevalent in Unitarian circles, in liberal groups within the evangelical churches, and in the case of a long line of philosophers, poets and moralists, while in the present generation it has been glorified into a social gospel with a broad humanitarianism as its basis rather than the individualism of Kant. It has also in history been closely associated with Rationalism and Deism, and it must be admitted at times has degenerated into barren sterility, with the Church smugly complacent in its role as a purveyor of moral platitudes. Yet the same underlying conception of the mission of the Church is present, namely, that primarily the Church is an ethical society for the moral improvement of mankind in the here and now.

Protestantism with its varied types of theology and religious expression has naturally presented various answers to the

^{*} Kemp-Smith, lvii.

question as to what is the mission of the Church. The Anglican and Kantian conceptions have already been briefly sketched, while those of Lutheranism and Anabaptism will be incidentally considered in the course of the thesis. Although the Protestant conception of the Church was essentially different from that of Romanism, none the less for both the primary purpose of the Church remained constant. Lutheranism, and Calvinism too for that matter, sought to bring the Gospel so to bear upon the lives of individuals as to prepare them for the eternal blessedness. The Church was regarded as the instrument through which God works to that end. With Protestantism in general, as with Catholicism, the Church primarily sought the salvation of individual souls and the spiritual edification of believers. In common with the ideal, however, Protestantism also sought to assist the State in insuring that God's will is done effectively here on earth as well, in all of earth's relationships. This attitude, as we shall see, was more especially characteristic of Calvinism. The nobler Protestant tradition lies in the combination of these two ideals, between which it has vacillated from time to time.

In the 18th and 19th centuries the Church laid chief, and, we may say, almost exclusive emphasis upon individual regeneration as its task. Any influence which it might exert on the world as a whole or on larger units of human society it was satisfied to wield through the instrumentality of regenerated personalities. The complicated social tissue might be left to itself. If the Church could only get individual men to experience salvation, their attitude toward their fellow men would

take care of itself and need be of no direct concern to it.

The Christian Socialism of Kingsley and Maurice protested that as a matter of fact this ideal arrangement does not work. Personal salvation does not inevitably involve right relationships with other men. A laissez-faire policy may be a very convenient and comforting theory for the Church to hold, but it cannot be pretended that such a theory is Christian. Evangelicalism had deteriorated until it was satisfied with a personal confession of faith and outer respectability.

Later Protestantism has put an increasing emphasis upon the social mission of the Church. This has found various expressions. Take for example the typical case of W. H. Fremantle, who urges that the Church should seek to develop a Christian society, "to imbue all human relations with the spirit of Christ's self, renouncing love, and thus to change this world into the Kingdom of God." Individual conviction is naturally of great importance, but alongside this there must be the full development of redemptive work in organised society. "The main object of Christian effort is not to be found either in the saving of individuals out of a ruined world, or in the organisation of a separate society destined always to hold aloof from the world, but in the saving of the world itself."*

At its best, this is a noble ideal. Sad to say, however, some of those who to-day are most voluble regarding the necessity

* Fremantle, "The World as the Subject of Redemption," pp. 5, 6, 9.

for the Christianisation of all earth's relationships seem to have forgotten that unless the character is changed no amount of social legislation can usher in a Utopia. Surely the bringing in of the Kingdom means more than the gradual amelioration of human ills. An eight hour day, old age pensions, unemployment insurance, proper recreational and housing facilities, prohibition, even the attempt to abolish war, - were all these and other reforms possible of immediate achievement, our problems would still remain all too largely unsolved. An increasing emphasis upon the social mission of the Church may be but a temporary phase in the Church's development. Has it no background to save it from its own excesses, and keep it securely based on a spiritual foundation?

It is the conviction that Calvin presents such a balanced conception of the mission of the Church that forms the basis of the present thesis. In the middle of the 16th century the world looked to Geneva as to no other center, and to Calvin as to no other leader. Friend and foe alike recognised in him the embodiment of the ideals of the recently liberated Protestant communions. Catholicism looked upon him as its chief adversary and the Reformed churches of all lands, not excluding much of Germany, looked to him for inspiration and guidance. Both his theology and the example of his life in Geneva proved potent factors in the development of a virile, practical conception of the mission of the Church which has ever since strongly coloured the life of Western Protestantism.

In the present discussion the method of treatment will not be so much to state in strictly formal terms the conception of

the mission of the Church held by early Reformed theology, as to sketch the more or less informal, unofficial, even unconscious ideals and principles which constituted the basis of its activities. The word mission thus will be understood in its broadest sense, as denoting not only the formal destined end of effort, but as the service to which the Church considers itself commissioned by God, the task which it feels is entrusted to its care. Hence we shall ask not only what is the end of the Church, what its vocation, and purpose, but also what spheres of life does it seek to influence or control? What is its teaching regarding the broader fields of human activity, political, social and economic interests? What are its ideals, the ideals of the fellowship of believers which constitutes the Church, and what are the sanctions by which the Church would maintain and accomplish these ideals? Not merely what are the ideals of the Church as an organisation distinct from the ideals of Calvinism as a system, but also the ideals of the Church as the guardian and propagator of the system.

With such questions in mind we shall turn to early Reformed theology as represented by Calvin, particularly his Christian Institution, Letters and Tracts, and as illustrated by the Reformer's activities in Geneva. As such, the treatment of the subject will be partly theological, partly historical. In the main the discussion will be limited to Calvin's own theology and practise. Such a wealth of material is there at hand as

to render it inadvisable to unduly lengthen the discussion by appending an account of Zwinglian conceptions, or, except incidentally, to sketch the subsequent development of Calvinism in France, Holland, England, Scotland and the New World.

It were easy to degenerate into an academic account of the Church as an institution, its polity, its doctrines, its ceremonies, etc. Ostensibly this has been the primary interest of theologians. Yet in the case of Calvin we see more or less consciously expressed certain ideals as to the end of the Church. Often these ideals are frankly set forth, but care will be necessary as there is no complete statement of them. They must sometimes be inferred from his general theological position, and interpreted in view of his activities as the leader in the Genevian theocracy. One must be careful not to read into Calvin's words or actions more than he himself meant. Certain of his ideals for the Church may best be found in his condemnation of practises and principles disapproved of in Catholicism, rather than in any positive statement of the same. While the sources of such ideals will at times also command attention, they will not be the central point of interest and quite apparently cannot be considered in detail. At times the influence of Calvin's teaching and practise upon subsequent Christian and secular thought will be considered, as throwing light upon his ideals for the Church, but by and large the thesis will concern itself simply with his conception of the mission of the Church.

The influences of the age in which Calvin lived must constantly be borne in mind, and it will be our purpose to compare him with his contemporaries rather than with men or principles of a later age. There is no rock in history upon which more ostensibly neutral ships have foundered than on that man of granite will and flint-like determination, Calvin. Strong men produce strong reactions, and Calvin normally elicits from critics and historians either ardent admiration or distinct abhorrence. It is difficult to be entirely free from bias or to cast aside the coloured glasses of partisanship. Calvin is either blamed for not fully realising modern ideals of religious toleration, or unduly credited with being the founder of all modern institutions. Yet it is easier to blame the great of the past for not fully realising our ideals than it is to see them in their environment and to credit them to the extent that they were pioneers, leaders and creators in their own time. Historical perspective is the sine qua non of any fair interpretation of Calvin or his teaching.

Undoubtedly Calvin's primary ideal as regards the Church was that of delivering individual men from the bondage of sin into the liberty of the children of God. Yet in this discussion not sole or even prominent emphasis will be laid upon this aspect of the subject, simply because in this Calvin is less distinctive. As judged by his theology and actions the Church must have other and more embracing ideals as well. If in our

study more emphasis is laid upon the ethical and social mission of the Church, it is not that this primary ideal is undervalued or forgotten, but simply that Calvin's teaching is more distinctive along these broader lines, and because this aspect of the subject has been all too far overlooked.

Comparatively little spade work on the subject has been done, and there is practically nothing in English bearing directly on the problem. Troeltsch, in his monumental work, "Die Soziallehren der Christlichen Kirche" has devoted considerable attention to the social, moral, political, and economic ideals of primitive Calvinism. On the whole, however, one must look to Calvin's own writings, particularly to the Reformer himself as revealed in his letters and activities in Geneva. We shall find that in no province of the Reformer's theology has he had a wider or more enduring influence. For him the Church was of supreme importance, and its work in the world his undying concern. To recover for our consideration his conception of the mission of the Church may not be without value as the Church to-day gropes with all too much uncertainty to discover the exact nature of its vocation.

One word of caution. There is an attitude of mind involved in some queries as to the purpose of the Church from which we should take particular care to disassociate ourselves. In the case of such ^{an} attitude the question is usually phrased thus: What is the Church for? It is implied that the Church is on a par

with the political party, humanitarian society, social welfare or reform league, that it is to be judged according to the facility with which it can be used as a tool for the revolutionising of political and economic life, the implication being clear that otherwise it has no excuse for existence. It as if the questioner were to ask: What is religion for? Again the implication is that it can never be an end in itself. Yet there is a true sense in which not only religion but even the Church is an end per se, wherein the production of Christian character and the development of a community of believers united in a common love to their Lord and in worship of Him constitute the primary ends for which they exist. The Church is not merely a human organisation to be judged on the basis of other organisations, but is essentially a divine organism through which channel the love and grace of the Lord find expression in human life. When Calvin thought of the Church it was invariably in this latter sense, and this conception constituted the basis of his herculean efforts to bring the true Church to expression, and to use this Church for the accomplishment of the will of God in broader spheres of human activity. We do well to bear this distinction in mind.

CHAPTER I.

THE ESSENCE OF THE CHURCH.

Nothing so filled the horizon of Calvin's life as the Church of God. To work for it was his chief joy, to purify it his daily endeavour, to insure that Christ, the Head of the Church, had full sway therein, to govern it, and use it for His own glory, such was his constant goal, the key to his ecclesiology. Whether, while still in his twenties, he was penning the introduction to the first edition of the Institutes, or whether on his death bed he was giving his last advice to his colleagues and the Council, his foremost concern was the welfare of the Church of God. This was rendered all the more natural because Luther had already broken the stranglehold of Rome, and as a second generation Reformer, Calvin's task was rather to conserve and consolidate the new Church. Hence it is with more than academic interest that we turn to a preliminary consideration of Calvin's conception of the nature and essence of the Church before we discuss his conception of the vocation of the Church. A man's view as to what constitutes the Church is usually the governing factor in his conception as to the mission, goals and ideals of the Church.

We might turn to the complete and perfected statements in the Institutes of 1559, but we should then lose in historical

perspective what we might gain in lucidity of expression. It is commonly held, and rightly so, that there is no marked alteration in Calvin's doctrine from the time of the publication of the first edition of the Institutes at Basel in 1536 until his death in 1564. This might be taken as indicative of a stagnant mind, were it not for the fact of the extremely early maturity of Calvin's intellectual development. It will be remembered that he published his *De Clementia* before he had finished his twenty-third year, and that the Institutes, constituting a landmark in theological and religious literature, were published only four years later. It is well to ponder the fact that what in all probability was the most influential book produced by the Reformation period should have been written by a young man of twenty-seven. Yet there is nothing in the latest edition of 1559 which contradicts his teaching of 1536, though it is clear that there has been a development, expansion and variety of emphasis.

There is no work in English which deals at all exhaustively with the subject of Calvin's ecclesiology. Reyburn and A. M. Hunter, particularly, have made a real contribution in the interpretation of Calvin's doctrine of the Church, but most articles have dealt with the doctrine as doctrine rather than considering its historical development and relationships. Among the many papers and addresses called forth in 1909 by the 400th anniversary of Calvin's birth, none of those published in English deals

directly with his doctrine of the Church. In Germany Rieker and Lang have contributed much of value in their discussion of the fundamentals of Calvin's ecclesiology, both regarding doctrine and polity. In 1909 there appeared in the volume "Calvinstudien," edited by Bohater, an article by Werdermann ("Calvin's Lehre von der Kirche in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung") which is a balanced and fairly detailed account of the historical development of Calvin's conception of the Church. The general subject has also been touched on by Seeberg in his "Dogmengeschichte" and by Wernle in his "Der Evangelische Glaube." A volume in English might well be written on this aspect of the subject alone, with especial attention to and evaluation of the influence of Bucer on Calvin as this has been emphasised by Lang. Such cannot fall within the scope of the present thesis. Yet we must indicate briefly the development of Calvin's doctrine of the Church.

There has been much discussion in late years as to whether Calvin was a creator or a mere epigone. That he was the latter has been the assertion of a well-defined German school, largely basing its conclusions on the alleged ascetic nature of Calvinism (See Ch. III). As to the doctrine of the Church per se the discussion seems idle, or at least beside the point. Absolute originality in thought is given to few or none. There may be originality in interpretation, in the recognition of inner rela-

tionships, in the ability to organise, systematise and clarify conceptions, and to apply such results in practise. If such be the essence of originality, there is a deal of it in Calvin. But one need not be surprised if one finds elements of Calvin's ecclesiology already present in Luther, Bucer or Augustine. He was the heir of the ages. He would have been the last to have claimed absolute originality of thought. He frankly called himself a student of Luther, and gloried in the fact that he too built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. "None of us liveth to himself" alone, and with equal truth we might say that no man thinketh to himself alone, for all are bound together in one bundle of life. Yet Calvin was far more than a mere "bundle of historical associations," as any man is far more than the sum total of the influences which have called him into being. We are rather interested in the distinctive features of the Calvinistic doctrine, or more specifically the distinctive uses to which the common Christian tradition was applied by Calvin.

To trace the development of the idea of the Church from Peter's Confession to Calvin's Institutes likewise lies quite without the scope of the present thesis.* Yet it is necessary to outline a few tendencies in the development of the Roman conception of the Church, and to glance at the influence of the pre-Reformers and early Reformers upon Calvin's conception.

* For a general account of this development see Oman, "The Church and the Divine Order," or a more concise discussion (in German)

It is a far cry from the simple fellowship of the apostolic Church to the hierarchical institutionalism of the 16th century. It is difficult to picture the poor Galilean fisherman, Peter, as even remotely connected with the grandiose See of Rome. Of course, in the first instance, the desire to guarantee the purity of the faith furnished the main impetus to the development of an institutional Church. The hierarchical conception of the Church was complete by the middle of the third century.* Bishops gradually displaced prophets, and the peril of Gnosticism drove the Church to the assertion of the power of the episcopate as derived from and guaranteed by succession from Peter. Cyprian impressed upon Christianity the conception of the Church as an institution whose unity depends upon the episcopate. This was but the outer expression of a deep change which had transpired in the religious outlook of the Church, which no longer found its essence in the fellowship of those who believe in Christ, but rather in a unity dependent upon divinely ordained bishops.

In the fourth century Christianity, therefore the religion of a persecuted minority, assumed a new and more pretentious role as the State Church of the Roman Empire. Hence there was necessity for a restatement of the conception of the Church in view of its new position of authority. To this task Augustine set

with particular reference to Calvin, in Werdermann's article in "Calvinstudien."

* Oman, 104-108.

himself. In the first instance he rescued from approaching oblivion the religious conception of the Church as the "numerus praedestinatorum." Yet goaded on by the excesses of the Donatists, alongside of this he also designated the Church as the external institution within which alone the predestinate can ever attain salvation, as a "Noah's Ark" in the midst of the nominally Christian state,* as the city of God, whose authority is guaranteed by her bishops, who are successors of Peter, a Church whose unity rests upon the unity of the episcopate.

Augustine never clearly distinguished between the two conceptions, though he visualised the true Church of the elect as existing within the Catholic Church. Yet increasingly he emphasised the institutional characters of the Church, until for him salvation and election tended to become an impersonal influx of the divine, the Church its sole sphere, the priesthood its sole instrument, the sacrament its sole vehicle.** However, it is important to remember that he did distinguish between the "communio externa" and the "communio sanctorum," and thus became at one and the same time the father of the mediaeval papacy, and of the varied forms of mediaeval piety, culminating in the pre-Reformers and the Reformation.

The relation of these two strands of thought furnishes a key to unlock the intricacies of mediaeval ecclesiology. There was never any serious effort to combine the two. Down through the ages they exist side by side, the one feeding the streams

* Ibid. 158.

** Ibid. 183 ff.

of the Roman institutionalism, the other, as Oman so aptly phrases it, trickling in drops "of simpler and more mystic forms of piety," at times of drought almost absorbed; but with each new season springing into life, and at the Reformation bursting forth as a mighty river, full born from Hermon.

It is apparent that there were many legitimate reasons why the Church should become institutionalised. In an age when the Empire crumbled beneath the onrush of Northern barbarians, the Church alone stood firm. The development of authority and discipline in the Church was imperative, and the mediaeval idea of the Church was originally called into existence by the exigencies of the situation. It is to misread history to regard this development as nothing more than the attempt of self-seeking bishops to consolidate their own power. It is doubtful if ^{Church} ~~the~~ ever could have ~~survived~~ ~~had~~ it not been for its compact organisation, its sense of a common unity.

Thomas Aquinas gave final expression to the mediaeval conception. According to him, the external, visible Church is the sole channel of salvation; through its priests, it stands as a mediator between God and man; its unity and authority are dependent upon the episcopacy, and in the final analysis upon the Pope himself. A hierarchical Church only is recognised, which is as tangible and as visible as any earthly Kingdom. In fact by the 13th century all of the elements of Bellarmine's renowned definition of the Church were already present.

It was against such a doctrine that Calvin protested, a doctrine which found the essence of the Church in^{an} external organisation, rather than in a fellowship of the elect, which placed the guarantee of its authority upon an exclusive claim to the guidance of the Spirit rather than upon God speaking through His word, which replaced Christ's leadership in the Church by a self-seeking human tyranny, which looked upon the sacraments as magical and degraded them to the level of cheap miracle and superstition, which insisted on regularity in ritual, ceremonies, and fasts, and all too often overlooked the weightier matters of moral character and Christian integrity, which made it impossible for a sinful man to find his God except through the mediatorship of an external, worldly-minded hierarchy. Calvin's doctrine of the Church can never be understood apart from his polemical activities against Roman abuses. We may well wonder into what other moulds of thought Church doctrine might have cast itself had it not been for its conscious or even unconscious polemics. Would Augustine have emphasised the external Church to such an extent had it not been for the schismatic Donatists? Would Luther and Calvin have so strongly emphasised the true, spotless Church as God sees it in opposition to the visible, external, imperfect Church as man sees it, had it not been for the tyranny of Rome? Would Calvin ever have subjected the Reformed Church to such an iron species of discipline had he not been driven to

this by the excesses of Anabaptism? What would we have gained, or lost? The Church is only/^{now}beginning to realise its indebtedness to heretics and polemical activities.

In common with the other Reformers Calvin turned with loathing from the Roman conception of the Church. Yet he was enamoured of the Catholic ideal of its unity and universality, and heartily concurred with the belief that the visible Church is of divine establishment. He believed also that the practise of discipline is divinely sanctioned and must be continued, and he was attracted by the mediaeval conception of a theocracy.

Troeltsch, in line with his favourite thesis that there is an inner union between Protestantism and later mediaeval doctrines and spirit, avers that Protestantism holds to the Catholic idea of the Church as an institute of salvation ("Heilsanstalt") purely divine and founded upon authority, only ("nur") rejecting the divine right of the hierarchy, the superiority of the hierarchy over the State, sacraments as means of grace in possession of the Church alone, and as bestowing some kind of assurance of salvation other than the assurance afforded by the word of God received by faith. As Doumergue caustically remarks, this "nur" is the crux of the problem.* It practically amounts to a statement that the Reformers in general hold to the later Roman conception of the Church except in those very matters which constitute the essence of such a conception, namely, a hierarchy, mystical sacraments, and ecclesiastical domination. Wherein the

* Doumergue, "C. and R." 17. Cp. Troeltsch, "P. and P." 64 f., and Werdermann, 273.

two are similar is simply due to the common Christian tradition underlying both. Wherein they differ is largely due to the fact that the Reformation turned back to Augustine and the primitive Church, and replaced the hierarchy by an appeal to the Bible. Protestantism rescued for the world the conception of the Church as the fellowship of the elect, a conception which had been all but absorbed by the institutionalism of Rome.

Wycliffe returned to the Augustinian distinction between the "Corpus Christi verum et simulatum" and defined the true body of Christ as the "congregatio omnium praedestinatorum."* The Pre-Reformer was particularly incensed at the displacement of the leadership of Christ by the human rule of bishops and Pope, and by the fact that the essence of the Church had been sought in institutional regularity rather than in the fellowship of the elect. Scripture alone is to be recognised as the authoritative rule of faith, and Christian living to be accounted as of more importance than the minutiae of ecclesiastical observances. Wycliffe appealed to the civil rulers to undertake the reformation of the Church. The Pre-Reformer's return to Augustinethought tended to fix the whole tendency of Reformationthought.

It is doubtful if any direct influence of Wycliffe on Calvin can be traced. Werdermann discovers only one reference to Wycliffe in Calvin's writings.** But indirectly his influence was undoubtedly felt, as mediated by Hus and Luther. Hus and Wycliffe were

* Oman, 194 ff.

** Werd. 273 f.

negative in their denunciation of the abuses of the Papacy rather than positive in developing a doctrine of the Church in its pristine purity. For Hus the Gospel remained a "nova lex." Werdermann finds that Calvin referred to Hus only thrice, and concludes that it is impossible to trace any direct influence of the Pre-Reformer upon him.

That there was a certain kinship between Calvin and the Humanists is undoubted. But Werdermann concludes that there was no direct influence of either Le Fèvre or Erasmus upon Calvin in regard to the doctrine of the Church. A wide chasm separated Calvin and Humanism in regard to specific religious and doctrinal ideas, however close their affinity in manner of thought. Likeness in moral and ethical ideals, a common distrust of the Papacy, a mutual admiration for the ancients, a zeal for learning and a passion for truth, - such influences were the bonds between Calvin and Humanism. But on religious lines a great gulf was fixed. He would be attracted by Erasmus' Back to Christ movement, but would be repelled by his inconsistencies, his suspicion of the Reformers, and his desire for a reformation of the Church through the agency of the Papacy itself. Le Fèvre and Calvin use certain expressions in the same connection, but this is rather to be attributed to their common dependence upon Scripture.*

The influence of Luther, on the other hand, was both direct and far-reaching. His conception of the Church was conditioned

* Cp. Werd. 276 f. and Neuenhaus, "Calvinstudien," Seeberg, 629f.

by his own experience of divine grace. In Christ by faith he found the forgiveness of sins, not through any merit of his own, not through the mediatorship of men, but directly as the gift of a loving Father. Salvation is the work of God, and saving faith His gift, only evoked by the word of God. Once freed of the horrible burden of his sins the believer is the possessor of a Christian liberty which transcends all earthly hindrances; he is a priest of God, and in his life good works spring into being as the natural fruitage of the work of the Spirit in his heart.

This experience of the forgiveness of a loving God and of justification by faith in Christ alone is in spirit quite incompatible with the Roman conception of the Church as a sacramental institution which is the sole repository and conveyor of divine grace. The freedom which comes through justification by faith alone and the barrenness of hierarchical institutionalism have simply nothing in common. They belong to different worlds. Hence it is natural that Luther replaced the latter conception by that of Wycliffe and Hus, and regarded the Church as the "universitas praedestinatorum," the totality of the elect in all ages. Yet in the case of Luther there is an even more personal note in his idea of the Church, which views faith rather than election per se as the constitutive element of the Church. The more usual expression which he employs is that the Church strictly so called is a "communio sanctorum," a community of saints, and is not to be identified with the visible Church

generally so called. Thus the idea of fellowship displaces that of institutional regularity, and Christianity once more returns to its primitive conception.

Yet there are certain marks by which this Church may be known, namely, the true preaching of the word, and the proper administration of the sacraments as visible testimonies and signs of the word. Outside of this Church there is indeed no salvation, for this Church is not only characterised by the two marks, but is the fellowship of believers. Hence the individualism of justification does not destroy the role which the Church must play. Salvation is in a sense mediated by the Church, but the Church is envisaged under the guise of a fellowship of believers. Hence salvation is not mediated by an external organisation, but by the Church which is the people of God, His agency in the teaching of the Gospel. It is not ruled by a hierarchy, for all believers are priests before God. Thus Luther guarded both against an individualism which would destroy the value of the Church and also against the excessive exaltation of the Church as an institution.

Yet the Lutheran conception of the sacraments opened the way to a revival of institutionalism. They were regarded not so much as an act of confession on the part of the Church as a bounty of God to be distributed by the Church. The Church tended toward a Quietism which was content with merely offering the means of grace, in relation to which the individual members adopted a

receptive attitude.* This conception tended to replace that of the Church as the communion of saints, though the latter ever remained the kernel of Lutheran ecclesiology when it was most true to its founder.

Zwingli, in accord with his greater emphasis upon predestination, supplemented his earlier conception of the Church as a community of saints with Wycliffe's idea of it as the totality of the elect. Though it is precisely here that one might expect to find Calvin influenced by Zwingli, any great amount of dependence is rendered unlikely because of the former's well-known suspicion of the German Swiss. Any such influence was certainly mediated by Bucer with whom Calvin had more intimate relations. The influence of the Strassburg Reformer upon Calvin will be touched upon later.

One sees at a glance the cross currents of thought which bewildered the Christian man and made it more than likely that in sheer desperation he would either revert to the Catholic conception, which at least had the virtue of being well-defined, or else fly off to the other extreme of Anabaptism. Once the ties which bound men to the Catholic Church were severed it was not easy to engender the same loyalty and respect for a new Church which was not very certain of itself or its mission. A systematic doctrine of the Church was an imperative need of the hour, in many respects the preeminent need. While Calvin built largely on Luther's conception of the Church, he recognised that distinct-

* Cp. Werd. 277 f. and Köstlin in Schaff-Herzog, article "Church."

ness and clarity must be given it else it turn back to Catholic barrenness. On the other hand Bucer's emphasis upon the subjective dangerously neared the abyss of Anabaptism. Wernle*indicates the three conceptions of the Church which struggled for expression in the mind of Calvin: the invisible, ideal Church of the elect, the visible Church of believers with the signs of word and sacraments, and the Church of sanctification with its emphasis upon Christian living and its use of excommunication to purge its membership. The relation of these conceptions is complex but important. One should remember also that millions still rendered unswerving allegiance to the Catholic conception of the Church as an hierarchical institution, while in Germany especially there were many groups of Anabaptist believers who in their repudiation of institutionalism stressed the aspect of the Church as a visible, voluntary association of the regenerated only.

Of the three conceptions mentioned above Calvin lays primary emphasis upon the first in his struggle against the abuses of Rome. The second, while implicit in his earliest writings, is given greater prominence in later years, due in part to his suspicion of the excesses of Anabaptists and Libertines. The third, while in form not foreign to Catholicism, is in spirit more akin to Bucer, though Calvin guarded against a too dangerous approach to Anabaptism by a recurrent emphasis upon the Lutheran marks of word and sacraments as necessary signs of the true Church. All these were contemporaneous tendencies. They are implicit in the

* Wernle, 56.

1536 edition of the Institutes, though far from formally expressed. That the first conception in particular is not emphasised so much in later years is not due to the fact that Calvin has outgrown or discarded it, or that he has allowed it to become absorbed in the second, but simply that the exigencies of the time called more insistently for ~~an~~ fuller emphasis upon the last two. The diversity in expression should not lead us to conclude that the conceptions are necessarily antithetical, for they exist side by side in the mind of Calvin.

Calvin frankly designates himself a student of Luther, hence it is natural that like his predecessor he returns to the Augustinian conception of the Church as the "numerus praedestinatorum."* In the 1536 edition of the Institutes we find the first statement of Calvin's doctrine of the Church. By the Holy Catholic Church is meant the total number of the elect, chosen from the foundation of the world, be they angels or men, dead or living. The election of God appears as the constitutive element of the true Church rather than the specific fellowship element implicit in Luther's conception of the Church as the community of saints. In this initiatory emphasis upon the Church as the number of the elect we may observe Calvin's energetic protest against the materialisation of the Church by Rome. The true Church is not an institutional hierarchy palpable to the senses, but its essence is rather to be found in the secret election of God. There is in this a swing of the pendulum toward a more radical religious

* Cp. Wernle and more especially Werdermann.

individualism such as that of Bucer, toward the exaltation of the subjective in opposition to the externalism of Rome. Men cannot even judge with certainty who belong to this true Church. This is God's prerogative alone, and men are unable to penetrate His secret counsel and know His decrees. We are to use the judgment of love, and account all to be elect who by a confession of faith, by the example of their lives, and through taking part in the sacraments acknowledge the same God and Christ.

In the first edition of the Institutes no distinction is drawn between^a visible and invisible Church. The ground for this distinction is prepared for but not explicitly stated, inasmuch as Calvin is primarily concerned with the inner essence of the Church, the ideal Church. Though reacting with infinite disgust against the Roman prostitution of the idea of an external Church, Calvin was too practical a man, and withal his judgment too Biblically grounded to admit of an undue depreciation of outward means. With all his emphasis upon election as the fundamental basis of the Church and as the bond between God and man in the place of an hierarchical mediation, he did not disparage the Church as the conveyor of the means of grace through which God normally works^a in fulfilling his eternal decrees. Calvin's references to word and sacraments, to excommunication, and the external ordering of the Church make it abundantly clear that even in this early edition he clearly recognised the necessity of an organised visible Church not identical with the ideal Church of the elect.

Calvin's first two years of labour in Geneva, during which he strove to put his theories into practise, produced no material change in his conception of the Church. Yet in view of the activities of the Anabaptists and of the opposition of the Council and Genevan burghers it was natural that he should more and more emphasise the external ordering of the Church. Yet this recession into the background of his emphasis upon the essence of the Church as the number of the elect, we should not interpret as a disparagement of its value. It merely awaited proper stimulus to recall it into expression.

Such a stimulus was soon forthcoming. In Calvin's controversy with Cardinal Sadoletto (1539) in regard to the nature of the Church, he was again brought face to face with the original Roman conception which he had at first so energetically combatted. Hence the Reformer defines the Church as the "society of all the saints, a society, which spread over the whole world, and existing in all ages, yet bound together by the one doctrine and the one spirit of Christ, cultivates and observes unity of faith and brotherly concord."* This is the true Church as it is before God, a distinctly Lutheran conception which lays gratifying emphasis upon the fellowship of believers as constituting the essence of the true Church, and utterly repudiates the idea that the unity and the antiquity of the Roman Church automatically guarantee its reliability.

* Tracts, Vol. I, p. 37.

Yet the 1539 edition of the Institutes reflects the same general tendency, namely, the recession of emphasis upon the inner essence of the Church. Here for the first time also clearly appears the recognition of the visible Church which is characterised by its signs of word and sacraments, (and practise of discipline, the first two regarded as indispensable, the latter as strictly enjoined, without which the Church is in perilous danger). Like Bucer he came to stress the sacraments and word of God as means of grace, and hence a higher estimate of the visible Church was rendered natural, as the channel through which the eternal decrees of God find fulfillment in the lives of believers.

The Ordinances of 1541 deal only with the external ordering of the Church as regards discipline, the ministry, etc. The Genevan Catechism of 1542 emphasises as a necessary article of faith the belief in one Holy Catholic Church as "the body and society of believers whom God hath predestined to eternal life."* Thus again we witness the recurring emphasis of Calvin upon the inner essence of the Church as a fellowship of believers elected by God, indicating that this fundamental basis of Calvin's thought remains unimpaired. This Church is not characterised as absolutely invisible, but at most as a Church which is not entirely visible*

The 1543 edition of the Institutes illustrates the same general trend, an increasing emphasis upon the visible Church while still retaining the original high estimate of the ideal Church

* Tracts, II, 50.

** Werd. 312.

known only to God, a Church, which in this edition Calvin first characterises as invisible. The latter is an object of faith, the former derived from faith and worthy of our esteem and obedience.* The fellowship element is not only characteristic of the ideal Church, but also of the visible Church as well, especially manifest in the communion of believers in the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. There is in this edition also a more exalted conception of the ministry as a necessary order of the Church.

In Calvin's exegetical and homiletical activities the conception of the invisible Church again comes into prominence, especially as related to the mystic union of Christ with the Church,** though the welfare of the visible Church is also held in view. The true Church is a remnant existing within the professing Church, a remnant which shall abide because those composing it are the elect of God.***

In the 1559 edition of the Institutes, the completed systematic work of Calvin, the two conceptions of the Church exist side by side. Following the words of the Apostolic Creed he expounds the clause, to believe the Church, as referring not only to the visible Church, but to all the elect of God. "But as they are a small and despised number, concealed in an immense crowd, like a few grains of wheat buried among a heap of chaff, to God alone must be left the knowledge of His Church, of which His secret

* Ibid. 313 f.

** Ibid 330 f.

*** Commentaries, "Joel", II, 32.

election forms the foundation."* "I have observed that the Scriptures speak of the Church in two ways. Sometimes when they speak of the Church they mean the Church as it really is before God - the Church into which none are admitted but those who, by the gift of adoption are sons of God, and by the sanctification of the Spirit true members of Christ. In this case it not only comprehends the saints who dwell on the earth, but all the elect who have existed from the beginning of the world. Often, too, by the name of Church is designated the whole body of mankind scattered throughout the world, who profess to worship one God and Christ, who by baptism are initiated into the faith; by partaking of the Lord's Supper profess unity in true doctrine and charity, agree in holding the word of the Lord, and observe the ministry which Christ has appointed for the preaching of it. In this Church there is a very large mixture of hypocrites who are tolerated for a time Hence as it is necessary to believe the invisible Church, which is manifest to the eye of God only, so we are also enjoined to regard this Church which is so called with reference to man, and to cultivate its communion."** Wherever the word of the Lord is sincerely preached and the sacraments rightly administered, there the Church has at least some existence. However full of blemishes it may be, this is the true Church in distinction from the false Church represented by the Papacy which lacks the two essential marks.

Calvin took over from Zwingli this distinction between the visible and invisible Church, being driven to this position be-

* Inst. IV. I, 2.

** Ibid. Sec. 7.

cause of his recognition of the large admixture of evil in the Church as it is. Yet it is quite apparent that the essence of the distinction is not in visibility or invisibility per se. It is rather in the Church of the elect "as it really is before God," and the Church of word and sacraments "so called with reference to man." Calvin does not use the terms "visible" and "invisible" in any ironclad sense, expressions which after all have no great meaning for the Christian consciousness. The New Testament simply distinguishes between the empirical and the ideal Church. Calvin was less at fault than subsequent Calvinists who laid an undue, disproportionate emphasis upon this distinction.

Calvin does not deny that the ideal Church of the elect has some visible manifestation; he simply denies that it is always visible and apparent, and maintains that it may exist even without any apparent form.* He indicates that this inner aspect of the Church (the Church "rightly so called," Luther would have termed it) while known only to God, has an outer manifestation as well which far from detracting from its inner essence is indicative of its presence. It is man's duty to make the empirical Church conform to the real Church, to make the visible Church show forth all the excellencies of the invisible Church. In opposition to Catholicism he emphasises the inner essence of the Church, in opposition to Anabaptism he emphasises its outer manifestation.

* Inst. Vol. I, Prefatory Address, p. 19.

It has often been averred that under Calvin the original Protestant conception of the Church as a communion of saints gradually recedes until the institutional entirely absorbs the fellowship motive.* It is true that Calvin did not share Luther's prejudice against external organisation. His well-ordered mind, his juridical training, made it natural, well-nigh imperative for him to reduce his doctrine of the Church to a system which would find practical expression. Calvin had a bit of the pragmatist about him, for the workability of any scheme was in itself a strong presumption in its favour, and practise was always more vital to him than theory. In a sense the Church of Calvin was an institution, whose guarantee was not apostolic succession but perpetuity of doctrine. His emphasis upon the necessity of a well-ordered ministry, a consistory, a diaconate, the practise of discipline, and preeminently the preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments as means of grace, all of these tended to institutionalise the Church. But surely it must be recognised that it was not a clear cut question of either or, institution or fellowship. In every edition of the Institutes, in his letter to Sadoleto, in his catechisms, it is evident that the fellowship element is prominent in Calvin's conception of the visible Church. He did not shrink from attempting to give the Church outer expression, (a course that the necessity of the situation demanded) but never to the extent that it smothered or absorbed the fellowship element. While the institutional element

* In fact Servetus made this charge against Calvin, that he laid too much worth on the Church in its outer appearance, and not enough on Christ and His Spirit. Quoted Werdermann, 321.

is necessarily prominent, for the Calvinist the external Church remains chiefly the communion of saints, a holy fellowship of believers whose solidarity is vital because of their common union with Christ. The Church remains preeminently an organism rather than an organisation, a fellowship rather than an institution.*

Whereas, as we have noted, the Lutheran Church tended to lose its aspect of a fellowship of believers because of its conception of the sacraments, Calvin guarded against this by regarding the sacraments not only as means of grace, but as the corporate act of the Christian community.

It has often been charged that in substance Calvin returns to the Catholic practise of regarding the Church, considered as an institution, (^{not} as the fellowship of believers) rather than as the object of faith. Such a judgment will not bear close scrutiny, for in spite of the misplaced zeal of later Calvinists, the Reformer himself was not guilty of this.** As has been already noted Calvin maintains that "it is necessary to believe the invisible Church, which is manifest to the eye of God only," for this is the Church of the elect; as to the "Church which is so called with reference to man" we are to "regard" it and "to cultivate its communion."*** ("colere iubemur observare eiusque communionem"). The visible Church is to be revered and

* In fact it is evident that Calvin himself closely related the two expressions, "the external Church" and the "communion of saints" the latter expressing the "quality of the Church." Inst. IV, I, 3.

** Cp. Oman, 236.

*** Inst. IV, I, 7.

obeyed; to withdraw from it is fatal if it be characterised by the two signs, which attest its integrity as a true Church. But as we have seen Calvin did not even desert the conception of the visible Church as a community of believers, let alone make the visible Church as an institution an object of faith.

This question of the Church as a fellowship and an institution is bound up with the larger problem as to the relation of the Church to its members. Is the Church a gathering of individuals voluntarily associating themselves together as a communion of believers to worship God? So affirmed the Anabaptist. Or is the Church an institution certified by an uninterrupted hierarchical succession, existing over and above the individual believers, to which they must attach themselves, and in which alone they find life? So said Catholicism. Against both conceptions Calvin protested with all his might.

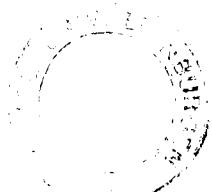
The conception of the Church as a voluntaristic society composed of true believers only, and constituted by the free act of Christian men, did violence to Calvin's veneration of the Church as a continuous life existing down through the centuries. The Anabaptists withdrew from the Church proper, both Catholic and Protestant, to form conventicles of their own, each one of which controlled its own affairs and was subject to no general ecclesiastical body. They recognised no distinction between the visible and invisible Church, but with the aid of the practise of discipline sought to make of the visible Church a literal

community of saints. Calvin was not without great sympathy with this latter aim, and undoubtedly through the mediation of Bucer this ideal did influence him. But with the Anabaptist conception of the Church as a voluntary society he had not the slightest sympathy, regarding such a ^{view} ~~polity~~ as not only unwarranted and degrading but as inimical to sound doctrine. His was the enmity of the Churchman toward the sect. It outraged his sense of the unity of the Church and of the communion of believers as a fellowship existing down through the centuries even from the time of the apostles. Such a precious inheritance is not to be lightly discarded. The fact that this fellowship is enshrouded in the outer form of a Church does not destroy its validity. The holier-than-thou separatism of the Anabaptists goaded Calvin almost to desperation. He pointed to the Scriptural passage which pictures the wheat and tares remaining until the harvest as proof that the Anabaptists were unduly rigorous in their weeding process by which they in effect claimed to interpret the eternal decrees of God.* Moreover, in that "they boast extravagantly of the Spirit, the tendency certainly is to sink and bury the word of God."**

With equal zeal Calvin opposed the Catholic dogma. Such a Church was to him the Kingdom of anti-Christ, which, posing as a mediator between God and man, blocked the free approach of the

* It is interesting to note, however, that Calvin blankly refuses to apply this text when dealing with the case of Servetus, complaining that to do so would render Church discipline impossible. V. Calvin's "Fidelis Expositio errorum Mich. Servet.," quoted Reyburn 188.

** Tracts, I, 36.



individual to God. Against such a tyranny the Reformation was chiefly directed. There is no mediator between God and man but One, Himself man, Christ Jesus. It is through Christ alone that the believer is justified; it is faith in Him alone as He is presented in the word that saves men. Yet lest this protest against the materialisation of the Church lead to a rampant individualism, Calvin taught that the individual is not above, but within the Church; chronologically the Church is antecedent to the individual, and the latter is primarily dependent upon the Church for his knowledge of God. Yet this Church is neither an hierarchical institution nor a voluntary sect, but a community of believers which is the bearer of the means of grace in word and sacraments. Thus in a sense the Church stands above its members who are dependent upon it, yet not even in exactly the same sense as in the case of Lutheranism.

For Lutheranism the Church is also a community of believers and stands above its members who belong to it, however, as passive constituent parts. The Church has as its treasure the word and sacraments in the sense of an objective divine grace to be bestowed by it on individuals. Under Lutheranism the Church again tended to become a dispensary of divine grace. Calvin, on the other hand, while none the less viewing the Church as a community of believers, with Bucer regarded the elect themselves as the active agents of God, as the bearer of the means of grace.*

* Cp. Lang, ^{"R. und G."} 160 f.

It is a very noteworthy passage in the Institutes with which Calvin opens his discussion of the Church. In Book III he has been dealing with the manner in which Christ becomes ours by faith, and now he proceeds to indicate how this experience of the individual is related to the Church. "But as our ignorance and sloth (I may add, the vanity of our mind) stand in need of external helps, by which faith may be begotten in us, and may increase and make progress until its consummation, God, in accommodation to our infirmity, has added such helps, and secured the effectual preaching of the Gospel, by depositing this treasure with the Church. He has appointed pastors and teachers, He has invested them with authority In particular, He has instituted sacraments, which we feel by experience to be most useful helps in fostering and confirming our faith God, in accommodation to our capacity, has in His admirable providence provided a method by which, though widely separated, we might still draw near to Him."*

The Church offers the external means or helps (most particularly the word of God) by which God invites the individual to have fellowship with Christ. The individual thus does not remain isolated simply because his justification is a matter between him and God alone; nor does the Church absorb the individual because it is the outward means through which the decrees of God find effect. It was a combination of these two conceptions which empowered Calvinism for its great task, and delivered it alike from eccle-

* Inst. IV, I, i.

siastical tyranny such as that of Rome and the radical religious individualism of the Anabaptists.

However, the relation of the individual to the community of believers is scarcely that envisaged by Ritschl. According to him "one cannot arrive at or maintain individual conviction of faith in isolation from the already existing community."* In opposition to Schleiermacher he maintains that all believers must come to Christ and His revelation via the community or Church.** Moreover he teaches a species of community justification according to which the individual is entirely dependent upon the fellowship of believers as the medium through which he receives justification. There is no individual election he asserts, but the community is elected as a whole in Christ as its Head.*** Only as the individual attaches himself to this community may he obtain justification. The Church itself is the direct object of justification or forgiveness.**** There is a community covenant in the sense that only within the community is fellowship with God possible. In fact Christ sought not to save individuals but to found a community of believers. Both Protestantism and Catholicism teach that men come to Christ only through the Church, but in the case of Catholicism this Church is a hierarchy, while with Protestants it is the community of believers.

* Ritschl, "Justification and Reconciliation," p. 110.

** Ibid. p. 549.

*** Ibid. p. 127.

**** Ibid. 543 ff.

As a matter of fact Ritschl applies this very doctrine of community justification to Calvin, and maintains that this is the specific teaching of the Reformer, namely, that the individual partakes of justification and the new birth only as he becomes a member of the community of believers. The Church thus stands above its members, and the individual reaches God only through its fellowship.*

Ritschl's teaching, however, is a gross exaggeration of Calvin's conviction that the fellowship of believers, the elect, is the bearer of the means of grace through which the Spirit of God normally works to produce faith in individuals, and to work out in them his eternal decree of election. In this sense the individual is dependent upon the Church, but justification remains a personal matter between the soul and God and is conditioned solely by the individual's relation to Christ, not by his relation to the Church. The election of God also predominantly concerns individuals. As we shall soon see even Calvin's apparent acceptance of the dictum "extra ecclesiam nulla salus" is modified by his recognition that the election of God is not necessarily bound to find manifestation through the ordinary channels.

The phrase, "extra ecclesiam nulla salus" had proved a determining factor in eliciting the obedience of all classes of

* Ibid. 186. Reyburn notes that Ritschl finds this arrangement in the earlier editions of the Institutes only, and not in the edition of 1559, and suggests: "It is permissible to suppose that Calvin deliberately excised his reference to the Church in this connection for the purpose of excluding the idea that there is any intermediary between the individual soul and God." Reyburn 356.

** Cyprian's original expression is "Quia salus extra ecclesiam non

men from the slave to the Emperor. A Church which could convince its adherents of the truth of this dictum greatly enhanced its prestige and power. The Roman Church prided itself on being the possessor of supernatural truth, so that even Augustine could say "Ego evangelio non crederem, nisi me commoveret ecclesiae auctoritas"

The Church not only possesses but guarantees and interprets the word of God, multiplies the ceremonies and regulates the faith and life of all men. Moreover God has deposited within the Church all supernatural grace, which is regarded as something material, and by the priesthood mechanically applied to the individual in the administration of ^{the} sacraments.* By virtue of the fact that the Church is the possessor of supernatural truth and grace it has bound men to itself by ties which cannot be broken. Its authority over them is almost limitless, its power for good or evil well-nigh incalculable.

The Reformer vigorously protested against this theory which rendered a man dependent upon a mediatorial hierarchy for all his knowledge of God, and for all grace which he is to receive from God. But with the advent of freedom, the consequent revolt of the Anabaptists, Libertines and freethinkers against all ecclesiastical authority confirmed the Reformers in the tendency to more or less consciously revert to the Roman exaltation of the Church as est" (from Epist. lxxii, Ad Jubajanum de hoereticis baptizandis).

* Cp. Bavinck, "C. and R." 105.

the sole ark of salvation. This was an almost inevitable development if the infant Church be not submerged by a flood of unrestrained individualism which it had itself released. Yet to the Reformers the essence of the Church which is the ark of salvation was viewed in a quite different light than in the case of Rome. It is true that Luther confidently asserted: "Whoever would find Christ must first find the Church." Yet this Church is not an hierarchical institution: "The Church is not wood and stone, but the mass of people who believe in Christ. To them one must turn and must see how they believe, live and teach, who certainly have Christ with them. For outside of the Christian Church is no truth, no Christ, no salvation."* The Church which Luther thus values so highly is not an institution but naught else than the fellowship of believers, the agent through which the good tidings of the word of God are made known. Hence the Church is necessary to salvation, because salvation comes from the hearing of the word which it is the Church's primary task to proclaim.

Calvin proceeds along the same line, except that for him election is the constitutive element of the Church. In the Catechism of Geneva there is a striking instance of this. One of the questions is: "Why do you subjoin forgiveness of sins to the Church?" and the answer: "Because no man obtains it without being previously ('premerment') united to the people of God, maintaining unity with the body of Christ perseveringly to the

* ^{Erl. Ed.} Works, vol. X, p. 162, quoted McGiffert, 43. (Erlangen Edition).

end, and thereby attesting that he is a true member of the Church... In this way you conclude that out of the Church there is naught but ruin and damnation? ... Certainly. Those who make a departure from the body of Christ, and rend its unity by faction, are cut off from all hope of salvation during the time that they remain in this schism, be it however short."*

Such statements are startling enough and lend colour to the accusation that Calvin regarded the Church as an institution existing over and above the individual, through which alone salvation is mediated. But two considerations are to be noted; first, that these are merely polemical phrases used against divisionists, and, which is more important, that Calvin is not referring to a visible Church, but as he says, to the "assemblage of those whom He has adopted to salvation by His secret election. This is neither at all times visible to the eye nor discernible by signs."** All of which is simply to say that outside of the body of Christ, outside of the fellowship of the elect, there is no salvation, which is quite a different matter from limiting salvation to some particular visible institution. The community emphasis is unmistakable, which indicates that for Calvin the elect are regarded as bearers of the means of grace through which God works in the accomplishment of His decree of election.

As time passed, however, Calvin increasingly came to emphasise the external, visible Church as the medium for the appropria-

* Tracts, Vol. II, p. 52.

** Ibid. 51 f. Cp. Comm. "Isaiah", 23:24.

tion of salvation. In his "Antidotes" of 1542 he asserts: "But we speak of the external form of the Church. For the true Church, as it is governed by the Spirit of Christ, will never, in judging, recede from the rule of His word We need not fear, therefore, at being excommunicated from any society from which God and His truth are exiled" (such as from a false Church like Rome) "But we ought not only to fear, but to guard with special care against being excommunicated from that Church which has for its bond of unity the pure doctrine of God; for there is no salvation out of her communion."*

The final edition of the Institutes is fully as outspoken, in fact most uncompromising in its severity. Evidently with Tertullian's famous expression in mind ("Qui ecclesiam non habet matrem, Deum non habet patrem") Calvin avers that the only means of entering into life is that the visible Church, our "Mother, conceive us in the womb and give us birth nourish us at her breasts keep us under her charge and government Moreover, beyond the pale of the Church no forgiveness of sins, no salvation, can be hoped for the paternal favour of God and the special evidence of spiritual life are confined to His peculiar people, and hence the abandonment of the Church is always fatal."** Such an act is a "denial of God and Christ, no crime can be imagined more atrocious."*** And these extraordinary claims Calvin

* Tracts, I, 107.

** Inst. IV, I, 4.

*** Ibid. Sec. 10.

makes for the visible Church! The Church is the covenanted sphere of God's grace; outside of it there is no hope! Is this aught else but a restatement of the mediaeval dictum that there is no salvation outside of the visible Church? In word it is that; in reality it is far from it. The Church which is thus valued as a necessary medium for the salvation of men is a fellowship of believers, a communion of saints. It is in no sense an hierarchical institution which intrudes as a mediator between God and man. Each man is still his own priest, and justification is by faith alone. True, the Church is the God-appointed fellowship which is the bearer of the means of grace. This is God's "ordinary method of teaching," in the confirmation of faith in individuals and in the carrying out of His eternal decrees.* Such a Church is the true Church because it is characterised by the two signs.

True, the Church possesses a ministry, but this is not a mediatorial priesthood; it is a ministry of service, not of power, a ministry, moreover, appointed with the consent of the Church members, a ministry whose primary duty it is to proclaim the word of God and administer His sacraments, presenting God's call to men. Neither Calvin nor Luther identifies the Church with any particular institution, but avers that God does not call men to salvation except through the word, and that the proclamation of the word is a special prerogative of the Church which is the fellowship of believers. The Church is thus in God's hands a means of salvation to men, though not an institution of salvation in the Roman sense of the term.

*Ibid. Sec. 5.

Calvin is not normally accredited with any degree of moderation, a mistaken conception, however, as will be seen in the course of the thesis. It may be said with propriety that he was preeminently a systematic theologian and that he did not shrink from expressing in extreme terms what he believed to be the logical results of Biblical teaching.* Some such unflinching resolution moved him in his advocacy of the dictum "Extra ecclesiam, nulla salus." But though Calvin himself did not consciously admit any exception to this rule, his teaching does leave a loophole or two, which eventually destroy its force. The smallest aperture in the dyke will in time admit the full sweep of the ocean.

Such an aperture may be found in the doctrine of election. God chooses whom He wills; to irrevocably bind the divine election to the ordinary means of grace is to limit the divine sovereignty, and this Calvin of all men dare not do.** There is in the final analysis only one ultimate ground of salvation, and that is the divine election. It may be difficult to correlate Calvin's conception of the absolute sovereignty of God with his assertion that justification is the result of faith in Christ, yet that he teaches the former as the ultimate ground of salvation is indubitable. Such being the case God conceivably may elect individuals apart from the ordinary means of grace, and apart from the Church. In

* Calvin was somewhat like his Lord in that he was not at all chary in his use of striking phrases designed to awaken people out of their sloth, indifference and hypocrisy, - phrases which however were never meant to be considered apart from their context nor to be indiscriminately applied.

** Inst. IV, I, 5. Calvin admits that "the power of God is not confined to external means," but only contends that His ordinary method of teaching is by the proclamation of the word in His Church.

common with Augustine, Calvin admits that there are many wolves within and many sheep without the Church,* and the basis of this distinction lies solely in the secret predestination of God. Not only does membership in the Church not insure salvation, but there may be elect outside of the Church!

The Reformer's doctrine of baptism also proved a potent factor in weakening the dictum. Zwingli had been the first of the Reformers to maintain the salvation of elect infants even if unbaptised, and inclined to the opinion that all children dying in infancy are elect. Though more conservative than Zwingli in this, and though placing more stress on the importance of the means of grace, Calvin never went the length of maintaining the necessity of baptism to salvation. In fact he expressly repudiates this view. The thief on the Cross was not baptised, nor were many of the early martyrs who were dragged off to death before they had presented themselves for baptism. "And for this want of water, will the blood of Christ be of no avail ...?" The case is especially appealing when Calvin writes to "A Gentleman of Provence" who is in dread and fear lest his little child should be eternally lost, because he had died unbaptised. Calvin completely overrides the objections of the brethren who had been scandalised by the man's neglect, and reassures the bereaved father with the words: "Since then on your part there has been no contempt of the sacraments it brings no prejudice to the salvation of your child that it died before you had leisure or the means to have it baptised."**

* Inst. IV, I, 8.

** Letters, III, 278 ff.
71 ff.

The same idea is clearly stated in the more formal teaching of the Institutes, in which Calvin denies that unbaptised infants are excluded from the Kingdom of Heaven on the ground that such an attitude does violence to the covenant of God. We are of course to seek the sacraments in the Church but "when we cannot receive them from the Church, the grace of God is not so inseparably annexed to them that we cannot obtain it by faith, according to His word."* Thus did Calvin voluntarily weaken the chains which he had forged to hold the individual to the Church, and placed election and faith above and beyond the ties which bind the individual to the Church. It is to misread the facts to conclude that Calvin's exaltation of the Church was in any sense designed to impede the free access of the sinful soul to its Saviour.

Certain other teachings of the Reformer tend toward the same end, notably his conviction that the Scriptures are accredited to us as the revelation of God by the testimony of the Spirit.** Even though the ministers of the Church interpret God's word to men, in the last analysis the individual by an appeal to the true word may know the will of God for his life. By putting the Bible into the hands of the people, and by his doctrine of the testimony of the Spirit, Calvin substantially aided in safeguarding the seeker for God from ecclesiastical tyranny.

* Inst. IV, XV, 22.

** Warfield accordingly remarks: Calvin "takes the soul completely and forcibly out of the hands of the Church and from under its domination, and casts it wholly upon the grace of God." p. 309. (Cp. 297 ff.)

In view of these exceptions we must conclude that Calvin's actual conviction was that as a rule there is no salvation outside of the Church. His is substantially the position stated by Bullinger in the Second Helvetic Confession of 1566: "...there is no certain salvation out of Christ, who exhibits himself to the elect in the Church for their nourishment";*or that of the Westminster Confession, that outside of the visible Church "there is no ordinary possibility of salvation."

Such exceptions may seem utterly to destroy the prestige of the Church. Far from it! They were of such an indefinite or precarious nature as to afford the individual Genevese burgher little or no certainty of any salvation outside of the visible Church. One has but to contrast the present day comparative indifference to the censures of the Church with the dread of excommunication in Calvin's day on the part of even the most worldly Libertines. How far this was due to the social and political penalties associated therewith, and how far it was a legacy of Romanism it is difficult to determine; both of these influences were doubtless felt. Yet there is no doubt that much of the dread was due to the common prevalence of such exalted views of the Church^{as those} held by Calvin. To all practical purposes the Church remained the sole ark of salvation, and the remembrance of this fact is essential if one is to understand the ideals of the Genevan Church and the manner in which it challenged the loyalty of its members.

* Cap. xvii, Par. 13. Quoted Schaff^{"Creeds,"} Vol. III, 287.

The relation of the Church to the Kingdom is also important. In his conception of the Kingdom Calvin did not merely echo the views of his predecessors, and in some respects his became the prevailing conception of Western Protestantism. The early Church had envisaged the Kingdom as primarily reaching expression in the future, rather than possessing present reality; itself it had regarded as the divinely appointed agency to prepare men for the Kingdom. From the time of Augustine Catholicism had tended to identify the hierarchical institution known as the Catholic Church with the Kingdom of God. Protestantism definitely abandoned this view. For it the Kingdom of God possessed a much wider, if somewhat vaguer significance. Luther taught that the Kingdom is established by the preaching of the Evangel of God's redeeming love, and that in essence it has existence wherever Christ rules in the hearts of men. Hence it is not merely confined to this world, but is composed of the saints of God of all ages; at present it is identical with His true Church, but it reaches its consummation in the age to come.

In expression Calvin's idea of the Kingdom of God is much like that of Luther, but his conception of Scripture, of the sovereign will and glory of God colour his idea of the Kingdom and impress upon it a thoroughly characteristic stamp. "God reigns when men, in denial of themselves, and contempt of the world and this earthly life, devote themselves to righteousness and aspire to heaven."* This Kingdom is two-fold, in that God

* Inst. III, XX, 42. Cp. Tracts II, 77. By the prayer "Thy Kingdom come" is meant "That the Lord would daily increase the

wields control not only over the lusts of the flesh, but over the thoughts of the heart. In His Kingdom the word is His royal sceptre, and our prayer should be that men may voluntarily submit themselves to the supreme rulership of His word. His Kingdom comes as evil is restrained, as true churches are established, as believers separate themselves from all evil, mortify the flesh and endure the cross. Thus the Kingdom is conceived of as the inward rule of God over man's spirit, as the submission of the believer to the righteousness of God. In short the Kingdom is the rule of Christ through His word over the lives of men. This recurrent emphasis upon the word is important, for it is a characteristic note of Calvin's conception of the Kingdom. Not alone that men may be governed by the Spirit of God, but that they voluntarily submit themselves to the will of God explicit in Scripture.

The prayer "Thy will be done," depends on His Kingdom, and cannot be disjoined from it.... "God will be King in the world when all shall subject themselves to His will", a will"of which voluntary obedience is the counterpart".* Hence the believer will crucify himself that his life may be wholly governed by God's Spirit. So will God's Kingdom come. According to Calvin to pray for the coming of the Kingdom is "almost the same wish" as to "pray that God would reduce to order, and at length completely efface every stain which is thrown on His sacred name."** Thus

numbers of the faithful, that He would ever and anon load them with new gifts of the Spirit, until He fills them completely ... that He would abolish all iniquity, by advancing His own righteousness."

* Inst. III, XX, 43.

** Ibid. Sec. 42.

a distinctively Calvinistic tinge is added. The Kingdom comes only in so far as God's glory is promoted; to work for the glory of God is to work for the Kingdom, and the latter is to be viewed chiefly in terms of the former. Yet conversely, God's glory is promoted and His Kingdom comes as men through His spirit voluntarily subject themselves to His rule as contained in the word. The Kingdom thus has existence to the extent that His will is voluntarily made the supreme rule of men.*

Sometimes when Calvin uses the phrase it has a more restricted meaning being practically equivalent to salvation and the spiritual life; "since by the Kingdom of God which he declared to be at hand, he (John the Baptist) meant forgiveness of sins, salvation, life, and every other blessing which we obtain in Christ."** Again "it (the Kingdom of God) rather means the spiritual life which is begun by faith in this world, and gradually increases every day according to the continued progress of faith."** Calvin also frequently uses the term Kingdom of Christ as equivalent to the Kingdom of God. It is a spiritual Kingdom in, but not of this world, which has its seat within our hearts. There is no disagreement between it and political government because it concerns spiritual matters only. "It matters not what your condition is

* It should be noted, however, that though Calvin constantly stresses the necessity of voluntary obedience if the Kingdom is to come, when such voluntary obedience was not forthcoming in Genevan practice he attempted to force outward compliance with the regulations of the Kingdom in so far as these were part and parcel of the Genevan theocracy.

** Inst. III, III, 19.

*** Commentaries, "John", iii;3.

among men, nor under what laws you live, since in them the Kingdom of Christ does not at all exist."* The Kingdom of Christ is spiritual, not material, eternal not temporal. It is true that it has a present existence within our hearts, but its complete manifestation is as yet a future hope rather than a present reality. Its present existence is only partial, and it will reach its consummation at the day of the Lord. The spiritual nature of the Kingdom is of preeminent importance. The happiness which it promises does not consist in external advantages - such as leading a joyful and tranquil life, abounding in wealth, being secure against all injury, and having an affluence of delight, "such as the flesh is wont to long for - but properly belongs to the heavenly life." Hence earthly trials, discomforts and troubles are as nothing, for the "Kingdom of God is righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Romans xiv, 17.) **

At other times power, authority, sovereign will seem to be the constitutive elements of Calvin's conception of the Kingdom. "Such is the true nature of the Kingdom that He (Christ) may possess all power in heaven and earth, until He has utterly routed all His foes, who are also ours, and complete the structure of His Church."***

Though primarily the bringing in of the Kingdom is the work of God, the Church is nevertheless the agency through which God works to that end. Hence the relation of the Church to the Kingdom

* Inst. IV, XX, 1. Cp. Comm. John xviii:36.

** Ibid. II, XV, 4.

*** Inst. II, XVI, 16.

is of importance. This relationship is not altogether clear. Ostensibly the Church was more central in Calvin's thought than the Kingdom. There are comparatively few references in the Christian Institution to the Kingdom of God, whereas fully a third of its bulk is concerned with the Church, its nature, its relationships, its polity. It must frankly be admitted that Calvin makes comparatively little use of the phrase, Kingdom of God, and that when he does, it has a somewhat vaguer and wider significance than the Church per se. By implication the Kingdom is identified with the ideal Church of the elect as known to God alone, but Calvin also identifies it in its present incomplete form with the true visible Church, that is, the Church which possesses as its hall-mark the two signs of word and sacraments. ".... the Church is the Kingdom of Christ, and He reigns only by His word...."* Calvin could not consistently hold any other view, when one considers his conception "extra ecclesiam nulla salus." If this dictum be applied to the true visible Church it is natural that, with the same reservations, the Kingdom should be identified with the Church. The Church likewise is the possessor of the power of the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, whereby through the preaching of the pure word and discipline it can bind and loose the souls of men. Such binding and loosing is authoritative because it will be based on the word of God. In this Church, to the extent that it is true to its commission, Christ rules through the word of God. Hence in a sense the Kingdom is identical with the true visible Church, and the latter is a temporal though incomplete

* Ibid. IV, II, 4.

manifestation of the former.

Yet, as we have seen, the Kingdom has also a wider significance. When we have grasped the fact that for Calvin the Kingdom of God is essentially the realm or reign of God, and that it has existence in so far as men voluntarily submit every action to the will of God as expressed in Scripture, - in this sense the Kingdom of God was of pivotal importance. Though he does not often use the phrase, this should not be taken as indicative of a lack of zeal for the Kingdom on his part, because the essence of his conception of the Kingdom was the central interest of Calvin in all his activities. Incessantly he stressed this necessity for the subjection of every sphere of life to the rule of God as expressed in Scripture. Thus is God truly glorified, thus does His Kingdom come . Not that Calvin for a moment emasculated the idea of the Kingdom to the level of bare social uplift. Calvin would have no patience with the loose present day usage of the term whereby nothing more is implied than man's gradual solution of his own social, political and economic problems. Seek to solve every social problem, (though in this you will fail), and the brutal facts of sin and selfishness still remain, without a solution of which most of our social problems will continue to all eternity, simply because they are in essence religious problems. And yet, and yet Calvin was not satisfied with merely preaching the Gospel of a Kingdom to be realised in some future age. Essentially the Kingdom was for him the rule of God through His word, the voluntary subjection of all to that rule, and as such limited to no age, but present, past and future, eternal in its existence.*

* In suggestive phraseology J. Paterson Smyth notes that during the period of the Incarnation Jesus was "only founding a colony on

Though the Church is in a sense the Kingdom in its present form, it is also the witness to and servant of the Kingdom and is to bring the Kingdom to exhibition. By the preaching of the word, by discipline, by advice, by leadership,^{it} attempts to bring all men to voluntarily pattern their lives according to the rule of God's word. Hence it not only seeks to prepare men for the future blessedness of the Kingdom, but also to bring in the Kingdom in the here and now. Where He truly lives in believers and works through them, there is His Kingdom. That God may rule through His word, this was the characteristic note of Calvin's life and activity. Thus is God truly honoured, thus does His Kingdom come.*

earth of the already existing Kingdom in Heaven." (p. 220 "People's Life of Christ," People's Library Series).

* A stimulating and fruitful discussion of the Kingdom regarded as the chief end of God is to be found in Martin Rade's "Glaubenslehre." (Vol. I of "Bücherlei der Christlichen Welt" - Gotha-Stuttgart, 1924).

CHAPTER II

THE PRIMARY MISSION OF THE CHURCH

Had Calvin been asked, what is the mission of the Church, his answer would have been short but significant: the Church exists for the glory of God and the salvation of men. Weighty phrases these are, in spite of the fact that they have been so carelessly bandied about as to seem somewhat hackneyed. In the mind of Calvin, however, they possessed very specific and far-reaching implications as to the work of the Church.

"Wherever we see the word of God sincerely preached and heard, wherever we see the sacraments administered according to the institution of Christ, there we cannot have any doubt that the Church of God has some existence, since His promise cannot fail."* Following Luther's phraseology Calvin thus characterises the marks of the true Church, which are the guarantee, pledge and earnest of its very existence. Thus will he guard against the dangerous tendency in the subjectivism of Bucer to undervalue word and sacraments, and will stabilise the Church lest it fall victim to the vaporous excesses of the spirit common to the Libertines and even to the Anabaptists. On the other hand by such a characterisation he aims to prove the emptiness of Roman hierarchical pretensions and to reinstate apostolic purity of doctrine.

* Inst. IV, I, 9.

What is important for our present purpose is this: these signs of the true Church are not merely marks testifying to its existence, but like most of Calvin's theology have a distinctly practical bearing as well. As he develops their meaning in his theology and practise, they are not only symbols of the Church, but duties, aims, goals, ideals, in short, aspects of the mission of the Church. These are the *sine qua non* of the Christian Church, not only in theory but in practise as well. Calvin does not set them as the maximum, but as the minimum limit without which the Church has no existence. Nor does he regard them as the sum total of all the Church's duties to God and man, but as the essential work of the Church without which it is not entitled to the name of Church nor to man's respect nor veneration as such. Hence, the preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments may in a sense be called the primary mission of the Church, for it is through these channels that the Spirit works to evoke and confirm faith and to carry into effect the decrees of God. It is thus that God normally works for the salvation of men, hence the supreme emphasis which Calvin places upon these two primary duties. Some would say that this is the complete as well as the primary mission of the Church, but it will be seen that Calvin was not of this persuasion. The practise of discipline in insuring the progressive sanctification of the Christian community, Calvin's conception of a theocracy, of the glory and sovereign will of God, - such influence served to broaden and deepen his conception of the vocation of the Church, until it included other ideals as well.

In one sense this view as to the primary mission of the Church is not at all peculiar to Reformed theology. On the evening in which He was betrayed, our Lord spoke these words: "As Thou hast sent me into the world, even so send I them into the world." As Christ is Prophet, Priest and King, so His disciples are given the commission to carry on His work as Prophet, Priest and King. Such is, as we have seen, the view of the mission of the Church propounded by Catholicism, a conception which, at least in word, is not necessarily at odds with that of early Reformed theology. However, according to the former view the twelve constituted a Church of apostles with Peter appointed by Christ as chief bishop, from which the hierarchy descends in uninterrupted succession, and by which the validity of the Church is certified and its unity safeguarded. With such a view Calvin had not the least sympathy. In fact he does not ordinarily connect the two triplets of thought, word, sacraments and discipline, with the prophetic, priestly and kingly offices of the Master.* Christ's work was unique, His a wisdom perfect in every respect, His a sacrifice once for all, His the sovereign rule of all the universe.

For the Catholic, the Church is Prophet in the sense that it is the infallible teacher of divine truth, that its interpretations expressed by Pope or Council are inerrant and authoritative, and that even Scripture and tradition are authentic only because they have received its stamp of approval. For Calvin the Church is

* Regarding Calvin's characterisation of discipline as a third mark and one of the primary duties of the Church, ~~See~~ Chapter VI.

Prophet in the sense of possessing the Bible as its one treasure and publishing its teachings abroad as in truth the authoritative, self-evidencing, spirit-empowered word of God. In the pursuance of this duty the Church is the recipient of divine grace, inasmuch as " ... the unction which He (Christ) received, in order to perform the office of teacher, was not for Himself, but for His whole body, that a corresponding efficacy of the Spirit might always accompany the preaching of the Gospel."* Yet the Church is no Prophet in the sense that its Lord was, for He brought forth a perfection of doctrine which puts an end to all the prophecies. It is the duty of the Church, guided by the Spirit, to proclaim, not to add to the Gospel.

For the Catholic, the Church is Priest in the sense of constantly repeating the sacrifice of Christ in the Mass, and through it mediating divine grace to the believer. For Calvin, Christ, the sinless One, as Mediator, by His sacrifice has procured the favour of God for us. His priesthood is unique, His sacrifice once for all time. "The honour of the priesthood was competent to none but Christ, because, by the sacrifice of His death, He wiped away our guilt, and made satisfaction for sin."** Strictly speaking there is no parallel between this sacrifice and the right ordering of the sacraments in the true Church. It were blasphemy were the Church to consider itself a Priest in the sense that Christ was such, and doubly detestable if a priesthood takes it

* Inst. II, XV, 2.

** Inst. II, XV, 6.

upon itself to mediate God to man through the recurrent sacrifice of Christ in the Mass. However, there is a universal priesthood of believers, for Christ also bears the office of Priest, that he may "admit us into this most honourable alliance. For we though in ourselves polluted, in Him being priests (Rev. 1:6) offer ourselves and our all to God, and freely enter the heavenly sanctuary, so that the sacrifices of prayer and praise which we present are grateful and of sweet odour before Him."* In this sense each member of the fellowship of believers is a priest before God, and may come into His presence without the mediation of minister or hierarchy, but solely through the mediation of Christ, the great High Priest.

For Rome the Church wielded the power of its kingly office by means of an iron discipline over the consciences and lives of men, through its exaltation of the hierarchy and the consequent subordination of even temporal power to the Vicar of Christ. For Calvin the headship of Christ in His Church was of primary concern. God has appointed His Son eternal King in the Church of God. The Church cannot fail because of the kingly rule of Christ in its midst.

"For God is pleased, mediately (so to speak) in His person to rule and defend the Church."** Calvin does not speak of the Church as King. It must exercise discipline, it is true. But this is simply the rod by which God rules, for the King of the universe deigns to govern through human mediation. Calvin throws every safeguard

*Ibid. Sec. 6.

** Ibid. Sec. 5.

about the practise of discipline and the exercise of authority by the ministry lest human tyranny displace the headship of Christ. God alone is sovereign; Christ is King, and the Church dare not arrogate to itself aught of the power which is inherent in the sovereign rule of God alone. The Church indeed is the possessor of the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, but only in the sense that it binds and looses by the preaching of the word and exercises discipline subject to its guidance.

It might with propriety be said that for Calvinism the Church exists for the purpose of preaching the word of God. "Faith cometh by hearing" (Rom. x:17) and it is through the sincere preaching of the Gospel that God evokes and confirms faith in men. It is the medium through which He ordinarily works for their salvation. This is a view not peculiar to Calvinism, for Lutheranism likewise exalted the word. It also regarded the word of God as a means of grace, but gradually developed an unfortunate tendency to insist that the word acts somewhat mechanically, apart even from the faith of the hearer. Calvin more consistently upheld the supreme sovereignty of God, and was unwilling to confine His power even to the word, admitting that His Spirit may work through other channels. Yet he insisted that God's ordinary method of teaching is through the means of grace, particularly the preaching of the word. The latter has power because it is always accompanied by the Spirit of God rather than because it has any inherent pregnant efficacy. Hence Calvinism, which was preeminently the religion of

the Book, nevertheless refused to limit the power of God to external means and secured itself against the tendency to regard the word as acting mechanically. A code book the Bible might perhaps become, but a fetish never!

A detailed account of Calvin's conception of the word is irrelevant to our purpose.* Yet certain elements of this conception are particularly pertinent inasmuch as they impress significant tendencies upon the Calvinistic Church. Especially is this true of Calvin's conviction that the Bible is preeminently the expression of the divine will. Whether questions of doctrine or morals, ecclesiastical polity, ceremonies or ethical rules, the Bible expresses God's will and is thus the supreme rule to which the believer should submit his every action, thought and belief. It is true that Calvin is somewhat diffident about appealing to Scripture for detailed instructions regarding civil law or for an exact pattern of civil government. Yet, as we shall see, Calvin's theory of civil government closely approximates that of the Old Testament aristocracy, and his system of theocracy resembles the minute supervision of every aspect of life so characteristic of Hebrew theocracy. Calvin's interest in the spiritual, moral and physical well-being of every member of the Genevan commonwealth is decidedly reminiscent of the Old Testament concern for the every-day life of the people. In fact if Calvin wishes to prove the legitimacy of taking interest or to demonstrate the

* For such an account v. A. M. Hunter, Chapter V.

truth of the doctrine of reprobation he will in either case with equal alacrity turn to the word of God. In Scripture he discovers regulations governing the right ordering of the ministry, the proper method of exercising discipline, delineation of the duties of subject to king and magistrate to citizen. For Calvin, who so constantly emphasises the will of God as the one sufficient reason for all things, as our one guide in every decision of life, the characterisation of the Bible as the complete and perfect expression of the divine will is of determining significance. Man's chief end is the glory of God, and the manner by which this end may be most readily achieved is that the will of God as contained in Scripture be made the supreme rule in faith and life, in doctrine and morals, in every phase of human endeavour. It is no accident that Calvin's theocracy is Biblio-centric. It is no wonder that the preaching of the word is of such key importance. Not only salvation but the daily guidance of man is almost exclusively dependent upon a right understanding of the will of God expressed in Scripture.

What then is this word of God, through which the divine will is made known to man? Calvin, unlike Luther, uniformly identifies the word of God with the complete canon of Scripture, with the Old and New Testaments. Beyond it there is no divinely revealed will of God; within it the complete counsel of God stands forth with perfect clarity. It is the duty of the Church to proclaim, not to add to this revelation.* The apostles of old "were sure and

* "I ought not to seem contentious when I so vehemently insist that we cannot concede to the Church any new doctrine; in other

certain amanuenses (alas that Calvin should have used the word) of the Holy Spirit; and, therefore, their writings are to be regarded as the oracles of God, whereas others (pastors and teachers of the contemporary Church) have no other office than to teach what is delivered and sealed in the holy Scriptures."* Pastors therefore are not to coin new doctrine, but solely to proclaim and interpret the perfect will of God already extant in Scripture. The Church's work is declarative and interpretative, not creative.

The authority of the word is absolute; it is the final judge in all questions, and to it Calvin accords his unswerving hearty allegiance. There is in it neither contradiction nor inconsistency. From Abraham to Christ, from David to Paul, from Isaiah to John, its teaching is the very essence of divine wisdom. There is no progressive revelation in the sense that the conception of God held by Jacob is less noble than that held by Isaiah or Jeremiah, or that in turn the teaching of Paul or John is to be preferred to either of these.** Scripture is a fountain of truth whose waters are uniformly pure as crystal. There is no flow nor tinge of error in all its pages. It is the very voice of God.*** It

words allow her to teach and oracularly deliver more than the Lord has revealed in His word." Inst. IV, VIII, 15.

* Inst. IV, VIII, 9. Cp. Tracts, I, 36.

** Yet Calvin of course very naturally gives predominant emphasis to the letters of Paul and the Gospels.

*** The records of Scripture should be recognised as coming from heaven, "as directly as if God had been heard giving utterance to them." Inst. I, VII, 1.

is true that this voice must often be interpreted, but any expositor of Scripture must seek to discover the "natural and obvious" meaning of each passage. With allegorising which seeks to twist the evident meaning of the word Calvin had no patience whatsoever. Should the teacher thus lead men astray by wresting a different meaning from Scripture he is guilty of the blood of souls. He has denied his Lord. Of course as a matter of practice Calvin paid due attention to the teaching of the Bible as a whole and was far more interested in the practical application of the word than in slavery to the letter. He admitted, even struggled valiantly for liberty of interpretation which did not destroy the plain truths of the word.*

* Cp. Calvin's denunciation of the dictum of the Council of Trent relative to the alleged inerrancy of the Vulgate. Tracts III, 71 ff. As to the fate of Calvin's conception of verbal inerrancy in practice A. M. Hunter (p. 72) significantly remarks: "The Commentaries afford abundant evidence of the embarrassments into which he was driven by his theory. Its vindication in detail demanded an amazing amount of strenuous ingenuity of whose disingenuousness he seems to be as conscious at times as of its unconvincingness. One may say that never did the idea of the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures receive such emphatic refutation as at the hands of this vehement champion, whose frequent transparent evasions, jugglings and violences are in themselves a confession of its futility." Hunter (p. 205) suggests that "the reason for Presbyterian churches being closed except during the hours of divine service is that their whole purpose was discharged in providing a place for the preaching of the word. In the absence of the minister to whom that function alone belonged, no profit or advantage was to be gained by those who might frequent them." It is only recently that the Reformed churches are recovering from this too exclusive emphasis upon the preaching of the word and are acknowledging the legitimate place and value of private meditation within the House of God. Moreover, Calvin seems to have failed to recognise that the Scriptures of the New Testament are not merely the word of God, but that as an historical fact they were at the same time the creation of the Church, which antedates them, and that the spiritual community which we know as the primitive Church existed with but little reliance on the written word. Cp. Leckie 126 ff.

The fact that in Geneva Calvin placed the preaching of the word as the focal point of his order of worship is indicative of his conviction that such is the primary and most prominent duty of the Church. As a normal procedure preaching services were held twice on Sundays and three times during the week, at which attendance was compulsory. Provision was also made for the training of children in the catechism, and there was a weekly meeting of the ministers for mutual exhortation and criticism and for the exposition of the word. From its inception the Reformation had spread in Switzerland by public disputations regarding ^{the} Scriptures, and the preaching of the word has been the keynote of the Reformed faith ever since. It is this, more than any other one influence, which has made the rank and file of the Church so intelligent about Christian truth.

At its worst, this conception of the word of God impressed upon the Calvinistic Church a type of legalism which was unwilling to trust to the liberty of the Christian man under the guidance of the divine Spirit, and desired to keep him in bondage to the letter of the divine law. Under later Calvinism Scripture tended to become a code book of proof texts rather than as a series of religious experiences in which God has revealed Himself to men. At its best, this conception proved of tremendous strength in empowering men to stand for the faith in the face of persecution, believing as they did that they were in possession of an authoritative expression of the divine will. Such a conception was probably necessary lest the infant Church so recently liberated from the toils of institutional authority should be dispersed in a welter of Libertine and Anabaptist excesses. And finally it was

instrumental in enabling the Calvinistic Church to apply the truth of God to all of life and to impress upon it this concern that every sphere of life be won for God, a tendency which happily saved it from the excessive subjectivism of the Lutheran Church.

It might be supposed that the Calvinistic conception of the word would tend to destroy the authority of the Church. It is true that Protestantism put the Bible in the vulgar tongue into the hands of the people and thus fostered individualism by making the believer immediately accountable to God alone. Calvinism in particular by its doctrine of the testimony of the Spirit rendered the conviction of the authority of the word dependent, not upon the affidavit of the Church, but upon the witness of the Spirit speaking in and through the Scriptures to the heart of the believer. Yet even so the Church, as the ground and pillar of truth, as the guardian of the word of God, through its ministry possessed a unique power in the preaching of the word. The word is the sceptre by which God rules and He is pleased to act mediately through human agency. The whole authority of the Church is centered in the word of God and annexed to it;* its proclamation is the very essence of the power of the keys which is the possession of the Church. Calvinistic individualism tempered, but did not destroy the authority of the Church.

To guarantee that the sacraments are "administered according to the institution of Christ" is a correlative duty of the Church.

* Inst. IV, VIII, 9-13.

In practise Calvin reversed the Catholic order of emphasis according to which the exaltation of the sacraments was accompanied by a corresponding depreciation of the word. For him the Church is primarily the teacher of the word, whose "appendage and seal"* the sacraments are. "I confess that our weakness requires that sacraments be added to the preaching of the word, as seals by which the promises of God are sealed on our hearts, and that two such sacraments were ordained by Christ, viz., Baptism and the Lord's Supper - the former to give us an entrance into the Church of God - the latter to keep us in it."**

Calvin, however, did not regard the sacraments as mechanical conveyors of grace apart from faith. They have no virtue whatsoever in themselves, and are but "empty pictures" were it not that "the efficacy of the Spirit is conjoined with their outward representative."*** There is no grace thus bestowed apart from faith in the word to which they bear testimony. For Calvin they are signs of what is actually present, rather than mere symbols of far off historical events. Participation in the Supper provides an assurance of divine favour and forgiveness. God is actually present in the Supper and His spiritual presence knits the fellowship of believers into one communion. Moreover, the sacraments are not so much a bounty of God as in Lutheranism, as an act of the communion of believers. In no other aspect of Christian worship and service do they so recognise their mutual fellowship and common unity.

* "Mutual Consent of the Churches of Zurich and Geneva as to the Sacraments." Tracts, II, 227.

** "Brief Confession of Faith." Tracts, II, 134.

*** Tracts, II, 227 and Cp. Tracts, II, 134.

Thus are they empowered and sanctified, so strengthened that they can devote themselves with unswerving zeal to forward the Kingdom of God and live for His glory.

In speaking of the visible Church Calvin not infrequently uses the analogy of the school. "Our weakness does not permit us to leave the school until we have spent our whole lives as scholars."* God develops full Christian manhood by no other means than the education of the Church. Not only is the Church a fellowship of redeemed men; it is also a school of doctrine and ethics. The Church has not fulfilled its duty with the bare declaration of the Gospel and administration of the sacraments. It is to build up the Kingdom of God in the souls of men. Not only by preaching is it an agent in the conversion of men, but by its constant maternal care it is to guide, console, comfort, and strengthen them midst the trials of this life. Like Hosea's picture of God as a Father leading his little children to walk and patiently guiding them, so is Calvin's conception of the Church. Yet the Church must demand righteousness of life; it must discipline and warn as well as encourage and strengthen. The pastors and elders must preach, teach, catechise, visit the sick, discipline the erring. Children must be taught the catechism of the Church, and be examined in the presence of the congregation. They must be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord so that maturity once achieved they may exhibit a consistent Christian character.**

* Inst. IV, I, 4.

** It has been said, with a certain measure of truth, that the Christian Church is an institution for the prevention of adult

Melanchthon, driven by the excesses of subjectivism, likewise emphasised the Church as the school of Christ. It is probable that such a conception is the result of a parallel development in the minds of the two leaders rather than that Melanchthon influenced Calvin toward this end.* In fact teaching is a very usual manner by which Calvin characterises the preaching of the Gospel, and his own sermons were preeminently practical and educational.

The primary duty of the Church is to faithfully proclaim God's message to men, and administer the sacraments in a pure manner (also to exercise discipline to holiness of life - see Chapter VI). Even though a right confession, participation in sacraments and apparently blameless life may yet cloak inner rebellion and a reprobate nature, the Church is to do its task, and leave the results with God. To those only who are truly elect will the Spirit give an effectual call, and ratify to them the grace bestowed in the sacraments. Moreover the Church is necessary to God's revealed plan. It is through its proclamation of the Gospel that the Spirit ordinarily enters men's lives. The Church is God's predestined means for the calling, justification and sanctification of the elect. "The means through which

conversion, and judging from the energy with which Calvin attacked the problem of religious training for Geneva's youth it is apparent that he regarded it as desirable that children should develop, never having seen the time when they had not known and loved their Lord.

* Cp. Werd. 306f.

the elect experience salvation is the word, and the place where it is experienced is the Church."* Conceivably it might have been otherwise, but since God has thus willed it the Church must obey.

At the opening of the present chapter it was said that had Calvin been asked, what is the mission of the Church, he would have replied: the Church exists for the glory of God and the salvation of men. Emphasis upon the glory of God as the highest good is of course not solely characteristic of Calvinism. Luther likewise so regarded it, but for Calvin the content of the phrase was somewhat different, and in the Reformed faith it assumed a more central position in both theology and piety. In his Prefatory Address to Francis I in the earliest edition of the Institutes Calvin pleads for the "common cause of all the godly, the very cause of Christ," a cause which involves mighty interests, first of which is "how the glory of God is to be maintained on the earth inviolate."** Thus over the very portal of the Institutes Calvin inscribes in flaming letters his conviction that there is no higher ideal for either individual or Church than to serve the glory of God, for this is the essential purpose for which the cause of Christ exists.

*R. and G.

* Lang, 160.

** Inst. I, p. 5 f.

As to the source of this predominant emphasis upon the glory of God, it is well to glance at Calvin's own experience. Of his conversion we know but little. Only in his preface to the Psalms is there direct and unmistakable reference to this event. In his letter to Sadoletto, it is true, there is a clever defense of the new faith which is so vivid as to suggest the presence of certain autobiographical allusions.* That his conversion involved a consciousness of freedom from the guilt of sin through the forgiveness of God is certain, but this was not all. At least two other elements of real significance were present.

First of these was what Walker terms "the conviction that God spoke directly to him through the Scriptures." It involved an "enlightenment of his understanding, no less than a determination to act."** That this conception became formative for Calvin's entire system of doctrine is almost a truism. In his preface to the Psalms he intimates another element: "God by a sudden conversion subdued and brought my mind to a teachable frame Having thus received some taste and knowledge of true godliness, I was immediately inflamed with so intense a desire to make progress therein, that although I did not altogether leave off other studies, I yet pursued them with less ardour."*** This intensity of zeal proved an important tendency, for it expressed itself in the absolute submission of his will to that of God in order that God might be glorified by his life.

* Regarding the conversion of Calvin see Werd. 257 ff, Walker, Chapter IV, and Lang, "Die Bekehrung Calvin's," 1897.

** Walker, 97. Cp. Tracts, Vol. I, 56.

*** Commentaries, Author's Preface to "Psalms", p. xl.

This is in fact the keynote of Calvin's piety, absolute obedience to the divine will in order to further the divine glory. This was true of his first edition^{of} the Institutes, published not over three or four years after his conversion. In the comparatively short compass of the Prefatory Address there are at least six references to the glory of God.

Three years later in his reply to Sadoleto Calvin again strikes this central note: "It is not very sound theology to confine a man's thoughts so much to himself, and not to set before him, as the prime motive of his existence, zeal to illustrate the glory of God. For we are born first of all for God and not for ourselves I acknowledge indeed, that the Lord, the better to recommend the glory of His name to men, has tempered zeal for the promotion and extension of it, by uniting it indissolubly with our salvation. But since He has taught that this zeal ought to exceed all thought and care for our own good and advantage, and since natural equity also teaches that God does not receive what is His own, unless He is preferred to all things, it certainly is the part of a Christian man to ascend higher than merely to seek and secure the salvation of his own soul."* Thus in no uncertain phrases Calvin registers his conviction that the glory of God is an even higher and more primary end than man's salvation.

The test of the truth of any doctrine is "its tendency to promote the glory not of men, but of God."** It is on this ground

* Tracts, Vol. I, 33 f.

** Inst. Vol. I, p. 11.

that the dogmas and pretensions of the Catholic hierarchy are opposed, in that they exalt men and are derogatory to the majesty of God. Likewise the same principle is the touchstone of true Christian character, for "the principal part of rectitude is wanting, when there is no zeal for the glory of God."*

Ignorance of the principle of God's eternal election detracts from the glory of God.** It is just that God should pass by certain men, decreeing their reprobation because this likewise exhibits His glory. The first man fell "because the Lord deemed it meet that he should --- that His own glory would thereby be displayed."*** Such expressions as these indicate that the glory of God is a phrase in which, as A. M. Hunter aptly expresses it, "Calvin ... was wont to take refuge making the phrase almost equivalent to the mystery of the ultimate reason of things."**** Whenever his inexorable logic drove him into a particularly annoying cul-de-sac, he would employ this expression: it is true because God wills it to show forth His glory.

Calvin himself does not give a very lucid explanation as to the exact meaning of the term. At times it seems that the glory of God is but another one of the divine attributes, being most nearly equivalent to the majesty or prestige of God, being to God what reputation is to man. So blasphemy, profanity and idol-

* Ibid. II, iii, 4.

** Ibid. III, xxi, 1.

*** Ibid. III, xxiii, 8.

**** A. M. Hunter, p. 54 f.

atry are capital crimes because they cast a stain upon the name of God, than which in all the universe nothing is to be more zealously guarded from profanation.* Yet as a rule the phrase has a broader connotation and implies the manifestation of the divine essence in all its excellency. God shows forth His glory by displaying His perfections, "His power, goodness, wisdom, justice, mercy and truth, which fill us with admiration, and incite us to show forth His praise."**

Justification by faith was the key doctrine of the Reformation; it is significant then to note Calvin's asseveration "that in the whole discussion concerning justification the great thing to be attended to is, that God's glory be maintained entire and unimpaired; since it was in demonstration of His own righteousness that He shed His favour upon us."*** God's glory is in this instance conjoined with His righteousness and justice. In

* Inst. I, xi, 2; III, xx, 41, 42; Tracts, I, 57 f. The unfortunate results of such a view are well illustrated by a sentence from Calvin's "Faithful Exposition of the Errors of Servetus": "Why is such implacable severity demanded when God is defrauded of His honour, unless the reverence which is due to Him alone is to be preferred to all human duties, and that when His glory is to be asserted our common humanity is almost^{to be} deleted from our memories." Reyburn 189. It as if God were jealous lest one iota of the honour due Him be left unpaid, surely a pitiable caricature of the God revealed in Christ. It is this aspect of the conception which Rade, in his "Glaubenslehre," (p. 55) so justly deplores. "Soli Deo gloria What is therein biblical and Christian we shall willingly acknowledge. But the shadow of Egotism now falls upon God."

** Inst. III, xx, 41.

*** Ibid. III, xiii, 2. Cp. III, iv, 26, 27.

other cases it is conjoined with His wrath, or His power. It is thus apparent that according to Calvin's usage of the term the glory of God is displayed in the manifestation of any or all of the divine attributes.

Every other consideration fades into insignificance alongside this supreme end. Man's salvation or reprobation is but dust in the balances over against the glory of God. It has been said that opposition to the deification of the creature is the central principle of the Reformed faith. This is but the obverse side of the statement that the glory of God must be preeminent. "For so long as a man has anything, however small, to say in his own defence, so long he deducts somewhat from the glory of God ... we never glory in Him until we have utterly discarded our own glory. It must, therefore, be regarded as an universal proposition, that whoso glories in himself glories against God the whole world is not made subject to God until every ground of glorying has been withdrawn from men."* The absolute self-sufficiency of God is balanced by the utter dependence of man upon Him, for salvation, justification, and sanctification; all are free gifts of God's mercy.

In practise "what Calvin understood by the glory of God ultimately was what He attained and achieved by the exercise of His sovereignty, freed from all restraints, guiding itself by purposes incomprehensible in general to any but Himself...."***

* Ibid. III, xiii, 1, 2.

** A. M. Hunter, 57. Cp. Commentaries, "Isaiah", 42:8.

Thus did Calvin dangerously near the conception of Scotus which reduced God to the bare level of arbitrary will without ethical content.*

However, a more practical content is injected into the term when Calvin speaks of another will of God of which voluntary obedience is the counterpart. God is most faithfully honoured when men voluntarily subject themselves to this will. An illustration may be found in the case of the Lord's Prayer, the first three petitions of which have their sole object, according to Calvin, in the promotion of the glory of God. "Hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." For when men voluntarily obey His will, to that extent

* Regarding the alleged identification of Calvin's doctrine of the sovereignty of God with the Scotist conception of God as Almighty Will, Cp. especially Warfield's "Calvin's Doctrine of God" in the Princeton Theological Review of July 1909 and Walker, 149 f., 418. Warfield (Note, p. 404) maintains that Calvin "openly repudiates Scotus and is so far from representing the will of God as independent of His moral character, that He makes it merely the expression of His moral character and only inscrutable to us Calvin did not hold that a thing is made right by the mere fact that God wills it, but that the fact that God wills it is proof enough that it is right." This would seem Calvin's conviction when one considers such a passage as appears in his Commentaries, Isaiah 23:9, where the Reformer roundly condemns as "shocking blasphemy" the invention of the Schoolmen regarding the absolute power of God. Yet in all fairness one should place alongside this a passage such as that which occurs in the Institutes, III, xxiii, especially section 2, which indicates that although Calvin was conscious of the dilemma, he did not entirely succeed in avoiding it. While in one breath denouncing the fiction of absolute power, in another he as stalwartly insists that "the will of God is the supreme rule of righteousness, so that everything which He wills must be held to be righteous by the mere fact of His willing it."

His Kingdom comes, His name is hallowed, in short He is glorified.*

What then is man's relation to this principle? He is to live for the glory of God. By this Calvin implied a recognition of absolute dependence upon God and demanded complete obedience to His will as expressed in the Scriptures. Thus may the believer honour his Maker. God is central, and we cannot even have a true knowledge of ourselves until we know Him. To make God known, to do His will, to advance His Kingdom, such are the duties of the believer. The emergence of this tendency in Calvin's own conversion has been noted. As he himself wrote to Farel on the occasion of his decision to return to Geneva, in spite of his extreme reluctance to reenter the city which had treated him so shamefully; " when I remember that I am not my own, I offer up my heart, presented as a sacrifice to the Lord. And for myself, I protest that I have no other desire than what is most for the glory of God and the advantage of the Church. ... I am well aware that it is God with whom I have to do Therefore I submit my will and my affections, subdued and held-fast to the obedience of God ... "**

"Ye are not your own," such will ever be the watchword of the believer. This conception of complete obedience to the will of God as expressed in His word settles the whole tenor of Calvin's theology and practise. The Scriptures become the rule for

* Inst. III, xx, 35-43. Calvin uses interchangeably the phrases glory of God, honour of God, holiness of God's name, hallowed be Thy name, etc.

** Letters, I, 257.

the establishment of a true Church for the glory of God, a theocracy becomes his ideal for the relation of Church and State, and the Reformed Church sets as its chief goal, submission to the rule of the word for the glory of God.* The Church exists to further the cause of Christ in the world, and this cause is centered in these three interests: "how the glory of God is to be maintained on the earth inviolate, how the truth of God is to preserve its dignity, how the Kingdom of Christ is to continue amongst us compact and secure."**

The importance of the phrase, the glory of God, can scarcely be exaggerated, as by it Calvin fired with divine intensity all the activities undertaken by the Church, even the ideals which the Church sought to realise in the political, social and economic fields of endeavour. By it he nerved himself and his persecuted co-religionists to suffer for the Name. By it he succeeded in making men constantly aware of a divine purpose. Weaknesses this conception had; it is quite right to insist that all shall be to

* That this conception prevailed also in the Reformed ecclesiastical polity is evident. The headship of Christ, which is the central aspect of this polity, is but a reassertion of divine sovereignty and of opposition to human control which would compromise the glory of God. It is interesting to note that to Bucer's two reasons for the employment of Church discipline Calvin adds a third, that God's honour be guarded. Thus is revealed the distinct tinge of his own religious piety called forth in his conversion. Werd. 283.

** Inst. Vol. I, Prefatory Address, p. 6.

the glory of God, but it is essential that nothing shall be accounted as to His glory which is unworthy of the God Who is revealed in Jesus Christ. Once guarantee this, and the conception is fundamental to Christianity. A man who has not utterly abandoned himself to the cause of Christ and the glory of the sovereign God has not learned what it is to follow the Nazarene, Whose very glory lay in the fact that He sacrificed Himself for men. This conception of service for the glory of God is the very mainspring of heroic endeavour, is in fact a veritable dynamo of religious power. One can only regret that the mind of Christ was not substituted for the ipsissima verba of Scripture as the basis and criterion of such commendable loyalty and zeal.

Thus far our discussion of the mission of the Church has centered about a consideration of its essence and its primary task as expressed in terms of the two marks, the word and sacraments, while mention has been made of the cognate practise of discipline. Thus considered, the sphere of the Church's activity is largely limited to individuals, to striving for their salvation by the proclamation of the word, to strengthening them by the administration of the sacraments, and to aiding in their progressive sanctification by the exercise of discipline. As the end is spiritual, so likewise are the sanctions. Persuasion, not force, is to be used in presenting the claims of the Gospel. Sole reliance is to be placed on the efficacy of the Spirit work-

ing in and through the word, sealing the benefits of the sacraments to believers, and guiding the Church in its employment of discipline. To maintain the Christian faith in the world, to reconcile sinful men to God, to be used of the Spirit in the development of a community of believers united in love to God and in a common longing for the glories of the world to come, for such ends does the Church exist.

Some there are who would call this the spiritual mission of the Church, and would limit the activities of the Church to the development of a body of believers separated as far as possible from all the contamination of the world, a body apart which finds its one end in divine worship. Hints that Calvin was the possessor of a much broader conception of the vocation of the Church have already come to notice. The Church exists for the glory of God, and God is most honoured when men take His will contained in Scripture as their supreme guide in every activity of life. God's name is not completely hallowed as long as men withhold this voluntary subjection to Him, and as long as there are spheres of life in which His control is not recognised. In such conceptions as these, which are fundamental and central in Calvin's thought, there is a ferment of ideas which inevitably expands the narrower conception of the mission of the Church. Has the Church no message at all for the moral, social, political and economic spheres of life? Is its influence upon these purely accidental, supplementary and indirect? Calvin would not have

had a moment's patience with the artificial and confusing distinction which regards the Church's work for the salvation of men as spiritual, and brands any excursion into broader fields as worldly, or as constituting the secularisation of the Church.

For him the task is one; it is all spiritual. The Church of course primarily seeks the salvation of men, but back of and beyond this stands his conception of the glory of God, of the sovereignty of God, and the supreme desire to witness the will of God as contained in Holy Writ recognised as the guide of men in every sphere of life. Such considerations, as we shall see, are the focal point in Calvin's conception of the mission of the Church and of the theocracy to establish which the Genevan Church bent its every effort. Ritschl's sharp distinction between the work of the Church as worship and the task of the Kingdom as service finds no echo in the soul of Calvin. A right worship of God, he tells Sadoleto, is of prime importance, but Calvin is far from satisfied with this alone. To deliver individual souls from sin was the passion of Calvin's life, but his activities in Geneva prove that he did not confine the work of the Church to this alone. Salvation even is not enough; it is not the "summum bonum," for the supreme end of both individuals and the Church is to glorify God that all may be conformed to the rule of God explicit in His word.

In many respects it had been easier to take this primary task of the Church for granted, for in it Calvin's teaching is

on the whole less distinctive. But to have turned at once to a consideration of the ideals which Calvin desired the Church to achieve in relation to the political, ethical, and social spheres of life, would have afforded us but a mere travesty of Calvin's actual conception of the mission of the Church. For Calvin the two strands were inextricably bound in one, and it were to lose all proper sense of proportion and to give us an essentially misleading perspective were we to ~~have~~ confine ourselves to the latter strand alone. This is the fault of certain critics (notably Troeltsch) who give us not an inherently untrue, but a partial, disproportionate and hence garbled account of Calvin's teaching. Therefore, at the risk of some repetition and of covering ground in which Calvin is largely at one with the earlier Reformers, we have sketched his conception of the essence and primary work of the Church. The fact that in the present thesis more attention is given to the ideals of the Church in broader fields of life is not that we would overlook, undervalue or minimize the primary work of the Church, but merely because we would largely confine attention to the more distinctive features of Calvin's conception of the mission of the Church. It is not inherently remarkable that Calvin placed primary emphasis upon the salvation of men as the end of the Church; this is fundamental Christianity; to have done aught else would have marked him as having departed from the common Christian tradition. The feature worthy of note is that in company with this he accorded such a prominent place to what men normally regard as the periphery of the Church's vocation.

CHAPTER III

THE CHURCH AND THE LIFE OF THIS PRESENT WORLD

It has been observed in the foregoing chapter that the Church's duty as Prophet, Priest and King, bringing men into communion with God, constitutes its initial task, and it may fairly be said its primary task. Yet in accomplishing this task the Church must needs engage in a wider scope of action than simply the preaching of the word, the administration of the sacraments and the practise of discipline. In these activities it is, so to speak, at the focal point of its work, at the center of the circle, but there are, as well, peripheral aspects of its vocation. The Church must take cognizance of the entire range of human life, its moral, social, political and even economic phases, for it is these which so often make or mar the souls which it would reach. The Church is "in the world," and though it be not "of the world" its members are necessarily so affected by the whole gamut of the life of this present world that the Church itself cannot remain indifferent. It must at least clarify its own mind as to its relation to the present life. This chapter is an attempt to give the answer of early Reformed theology to this problem. Or we may ask regarding its foremost representative: what was Calvin's attitude

toward the present life? The answer is of basic importance in any consideration of the mission of the Church as envisaged by Calvin.

Calvin's teaching, it is sometimes alleged, is characterised by a type of self-denial which approximates monastic asceticism, by a contempt for the present world as substantially evil which leads him to discount its importance in favour of an overmastering otherworldliness. In fact a profound conviction of the utter depravity of sinful man and the sharp distinction which he draws between the creature and the Creator lead him to a type of eschatological pessimism. It is asserted that not only such a form of piety may, but in Calvin's case does permeate both teaching and life, leading him to flee from the world, to despise its occupations and pleasures, to submit to its inequalities, suffering and trials with stoical patience, and to focus his interest on the glories of the life to come. His ideal is that of the saint of Patmos gazing on the glories of the New Jerusalem, or that of the grim, somber, Puritan with his contempt for the fleeting joys and the pleasures incident to the present life. His piety is a revival of mediaeval monachism. On the surface alone is it at one with Luther or the Reformation. Fundamentally, in motive and spirit, there surges within him the current of Catholic asceticism, as his regulation of morals in connection with Church discipline clearly shows.

We should not be surprised at such sweeping denunciations of Calvin's piety by the pleasure-loving Libertines of Geneva,

the gay courtiers of the French court or the Cavaliers of a later age. But instead we find such criticisms as the above, either in whole or in part, seriously and ably advanced by theologians and historians of the present day as in fact constituting the characteristic piety of Calvin. If this be in truth Calvin's attitude, its effect upon his conception of the mission and ideals of the Church will be profound and far-reaching. If the life of the present world be unreservedly condemned as evil, if its good things are but traps to catch the unwary, if life per se be for the Christian naught but a weary pilgrimage along which he must patiently trudge as he gazes eagerly toward the goal of the next world; then, as a corollary, the Church has no message for the world except one of condemnation, no part in its life, except as its members grudgingly satisfy the bare needs of physical existence, no mission, except to pluck a few "brands from the burning " of this present day Sodom and Gomorrah. In short such a conception involves a sharply drawn separatism from the life of the world with contempt for it and pity for its inhabitants.

Such might have been Calvin's conception, but, - it was not. As we shall see, in company with Luther he turned from mediaeval monachism with horror and contempt. His Humanistic background had engendered within him a respect for the best of this world's thought and life. Above all his deep religious sense with its supreme emphasis upon the sovereignty of God required that that sovereignty not only find expression in the life to come, but in all phases of the life of this world as well.*

* The danger of calling any sphere of life evil per se is aptly

History affords many examples of the manner in which the ascetic spirit has been a determining factor in the conception of the vocation of the Church. There was a sharp and cruel intensity to the distinction which the mediaeval Church had drawn between ^{the} sacred and secular. God's Kingdom, that is the Church, is essentially sacred. The world, both the material universe itself and the entire structure of social, family, economic and political life is secular, profane and prone to evil except as it may be blessed by the Church. The Church is the depository of supernatural grace and truth; the world is natural, secular, transitory. To renounce the world and submit to the Church is to obtain grace and to overcome the world. As Augustine expressed it in an earlier day in his "De Civitate Dei," the Church has nothing to do with the life of mankind; it does not strive to remake the world; it awaits the conflagration to consume the fabric of this world and make it fit for God's saints.*

expressed by Bishop Fremantle (page 283): "Experience shows that where any set of persons and any sphere of life is degraded in the estimation of mankind, as the occupation of tax gatherers in the time of Christ, it is almost sure to become irreligious, and to fulfill the evil prophecy which has gone out against it." If the Church regard the world as evil per se, then the wildest fancies which asceticism visualises concerning it are certain to grow into reality, and the Church will tend to become a body of timid separatists, in mental and spiritual interest as distinct from the world as if on another planet.

* Fremantle, Ibid. 167 ff. Cp. Bavinck (106 f.) and Lang (91 ff.) in "C. and R." Bavinck argues most convincingly that the entire hierarchical idea of the Roman Church has as its basis the clear cut distinction between nature and grace, and that since the Church is the God-appointed depository of these blessings, the relation between grace and nature coincides with that between the Church and the world.

Now this might have been a noble ideal had it not been that the Church to which man must submit was an external, hierarchical institution, and that overcoming the world by means of the grace given by its consecration often meant nothing more than a veneering of the surface life of the world, or resulted in ascetic flight out of the world altogether. As a recent writer has most felicitously phrased it: "The mediaeval Church had no other idea than to take the world as it was and incorporate it with itself. It was content to paste the ecclesiastical label on its outside, to preempt it by an external consecration."* The world itself it regarded as profane and capable of becoming a "vehicle of grace" only in so far as blessed by the Church.

This spirit of course went hand in hand with an asceticism which the Church fostered in its cloisters and monasteries, a type of piety usually quite severed from the life of the world. Romanism, to be sure, practised much true benevolence, sought to determine the policies of State, even controlled and developed art and literature within certain rigid bounds. Rather than itself being the cause of the Dark Ages, it bore aloft the torch of learning and civilisation. Yet all the time it regarded these aspects of life as secular and inevitably prone to evil unless consecrated by the Church. The world itself was scorned, appropriated to be sure by the Church, yet none the less held in contempt. It was regarded as possessing no intrinsic worth. The task of the Church was thus centered in the attempt to snatch souls out of this evil world into its ark of refuge. Its center

* Forsyth, p. 729.

of interest was transferred from this world to the world to come, while the ascetic spirit precluded the possibility of the will of God finding concrete expression in the social, economic and political fabric except in so far as these spheres were directly controlled by the Church.

The Anabaptists of the day represented the other extreme as regards the institution and organisation of the Church. Yet in a curious manner they perpetuated the conservatism of the mediaeval Church as regards its attitude toward the present life. They too stressed a sharp cleavage between the Church and the world, and consequently, in accordance with their conception of the Church, took as their goal the formation of societies of Christian brethren carefully protected from the corruption of this evil world. Un-worldliness or otherworldliness became their keynote, and not infrequently they advocated an asceticism, which, though differing in expression, was in spirit the same as Roman monasticism. Not only was the Church to be rigidly separated from the State, but some Anabaptists professed the utmost contempt for all civil government, regarded the taking of oaths, holding of office and litigation as un-Christian, while a minority even favoured communism and anarchism, and in every sense strove to withdraw themselves from the contaminating world into their own pietistic brotherhoods. Such a spirit of asceticism minimized the influence which Anabaptism might hope to exert on the several phases of human life.

Lutheranism of course broke entirely away from the monachism of the mediaeval Church. Yet, as we shall have occasion to note from time to time, it nevertheless took an essentially negative view of the world, in fact a negativism which approached the ascetic. Luther, in drawing a sharp distinction between the Kingdom of God under Christ and the kingdom of the world under the magistrate, speaks of the latter as evil through and through. "We are serving here in an inn, where the devil is master, and the world mistress, and all kinds of evil desires are the household; and these all together, master, mistress and household, are the Gospel's enemies and adversaries. If a man steals thy gold, defames thy honour, remember, in this house, this is the way things go."* Such a quotation is indeed fairly typical of the negative aspect of Luther's attitude toward the life of the present world. Though the Reformer regarded the office of magistrate as of divine appointment, a negative view of the State's functions is more usual with him than a positive one. (Cp. Chapter IV). The Church is to limit itself to the preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments; the world is the province of the civil magistrate that he may curb evil. To the Christian the present life is a vale of tears to be patiently endured. Lutheranism in general adopted a laissez-faire attitude toward social, political and economic wrongs, relying solely upon the spiritual power of word and sacraments and their effect on individuals.

* Luther: Erlangen 50., 349 f, quoted by Lang in "C. and R." p.65.

Asceticism per se is perfectly compatible with any type of Church ecclesiastical polity. Its expression may differ, yet both the hierarchical Church of mediaevalism and the voluntaristic communities of Anabaptism found place for a strong ascetic spirit. The same, however, cannot be said of the conception of the mission of the Church, which is vitally affected by the ascetic or non-ascetic attitude of the Church. Hence it is important that we examine somewhat in detail Calvin's alleged otherworldliness and asceticism as he himself presents the issue in his Institutes. Particular notice will be paid to those passages which constitute the basis of the criticisms passed on Calvin's piety.* Critics usually focus their attention on three chapters in Book III of the Institutes, viz., Chapter VII, "Of Self-Denial," Chapter VIII, "Of Bearing the Cross" and Chapter IX, "Of Meditating on the Future Life." We shall consider the last-named chapter first, as it contains the kernel of the matter.

The chapter opens with this categorical assertion: "Whatever be the kind of tribulation with which we are afflicted, we should always consider the end of it to be, that we may be trained to despise the present, and thereby stimulated to aspire to the future life..... our mind never rises seriously to desire and aspire after the future, until it has learned to despise the present life."** Our minds are too much dazzled by the splendour of earth. Our recognition of the fleeting nature of the present life is theoretical only, for as a matter of fact we have acted

* Doumergue has covered this ground in an admirable article entitled "Calvin: Epigone or Creator" (in "C. and R."). However,

"as if we had fixed our immortality on the earth." Yet Heaven is our home, earth but a place of exile; departure from this life is entrance into heavenly bliss. "Let us ardently long for death, and constantly meditate upon it, and in comparison with future immortality, let us despise life, and, on account of the bondage of sin, long to renounce it whenever it shall so please the Lord."*** "The Christian is subject to this law - he must indulge as little as possible; it must be his constant aim, not only to curb luxury, but to cut off all show of superfluous abundance ..."**** Perhaps the most uncompromising statement of all is found in the words: "For there is no medium between the two things: the earth must either be worthless in our estimation, or keep us enslaved by an intemperate love of it. Therefore, if we have any regard to eternity, we must care-

he has in view Calvin's alleged asceticism as related to the thesis of Ernst Troeltsch that the Reformers are at one with the Middle Ages. Hence he does not touch on the question as related to the doctrine of the Church. Though in this instance one must heartily agree with Doumergue's conclusions, one cannot suppress the conviction that his ardent admiration for the Reformer is somewhat unrestrained and hence prejudicial to unbiased judgment. There is shade as well as sunlight in Calvin, and the historian should try to be as impartial as the photographer. Kuyper's articles are even less restrained.

** Inst. III, IX, 1.

*** Ibid. Sec. 2.

**** Ibid. X, 4.

fully strive to disencumber ourselves of these fetters."*

It should be cheerfully granted that the above quotations justify the conclusion that for Calvin otherworldliness is a vital element in faith and piety. A few expressions undoubtedly indicate disdain and contempt for the present life. Yet it is quite another matter ipso facto to conclude that therefore the distinguishing mark of Calvin's piety is meditation on the future life. Nor does it by any means justify the judgment of Professor McGiffert (when he cites these passages as proof that in regard to Calvin's ideal of the Christian life): "Otherworldliness was its principal characteristic, abstinence from the pleasures and frivolities and luxuries of this world, as well as from its sins."** Such a criticism contains a modicum of truth, but it shows utter lack of any sense of proportion, not to say fair-mindedness to fix on these statements isolated from their context as necessarily constituting the chief or determining note of Calvin's piety.

The vital question is: what interest has Calvin at stake when he professes disdain for this world? What is he seeking to prove? Upon the answer must depend one's evaluation of his statements. Let it be carefully noted that Calvin does not say that this world is evil per se; it is "vitiated by a great admixture of evil"*** to be sure, because of the domination of sin and selfishness, but Calvin is no Manichaeon. He does not regard the world

* Ibid. IX, 2.

** McGiffert, "Prot. Thought Before Kant," 91 f.

*** Inst. III, IX, 1.

as intrinsically evil, and he does not condemn it except in so far as it is sinful. Neither does he counsel hatred of the world. This present life is to be despised and contemned, it is true, but (and this expression invariably accompanies the phrase) only despised in comparison with the future life. This is the key to a proper understanding of Calvin's meaning. In other words, the interest Calvin has at stake is not that believers either flee away into ascetic monasticism, nor adopt a passive negative attitude toward the world, not at all, but, as he is careful to say, that believers may escape from excessive fondness for this world.* This point of view was rendered necessary in order to save the Protestant communion from the current excesses of Libertinism. And if the Church were merely accorded the alternative of Libertinism or materialism on the one hand and otherworldliness on the other, it need have no doubt as to which is the nobler ideal.

Even the extreme statement of section 2, that there is no middle ground between despising the world and intemperately loving it, must be regarded as only one of the vehement, paradoxical expressions not uncommon with Calvin and not unlike the Master's own phraseology. To fasten on such an isolated statement in its bald, uncompromising literalness is to entirely miss its meaning. One must not overlook the context nor forget the main interest which Calvin has at stake, namely, to guard believers against an "intemperate love" of this earth. That this is such an isolated

* Ibid. Sec. 3.

statement not to be taken as the distinguishing characteristic of his piety is even more apparent when we note that Calvin himself is very precise in detailing a via media between the two extremes.* Moreover, in the paragraph following this statement, he counsels: "Still the contempt which believers should train themselves to feel for the present life, must not be of a kind to beget hatred of it or ingratitude to God. This life is justly classed among divine blessings which are not to be despised. Wherefore, if we do not recognise the kindness of God in it, we are chargeable with no little ingratitude towards Him." We must only "beware of converting a help into a hindrance.**"

This ideal bears a suspicious resemblance to that of the New Testament, even in exact word and expression (viz., I John, ii, 15-17; I Cor., xv, 19; I John, v, 19, etc.). It is simply a flat refusal to be bound to this world, a clarion call of warning against all worldliness as an end in itself, a frank avowal that as a matter of comparison otherworldliness is far to be preferred to a slavish love of this life, - yet a reminder that this life is a gift of God, which should elicit gratitude, not hatred, a "proof of the divine benevolence, since it is wholly destined to promote ... salvation."*** This is a fair summary of the teaching of those passages which are generally quoted as substantiating Calvin's asceticism. In expression, this is undoubtedly otherworldliness, but not the otherworldliness characteristic of the ascetic nor even of the negative attitude so prevalent in much of Lutheranism, but rather the dynamic for a program of service

* Ibid. X, 1, 2. ** Ibid. IX, 3; X, 4. *** Ibid. IX, 3.

that the will of God may find expression in the life of this present world.

Otherworldliness is too often regarded as a reproach. It need not be so. Worldliness is a far more subtle foe of the Church and the Kingdom of God. Much current condemnation of otherworldliness is only a smoke screen to cover up a blatant materialism or a cankerous sensualism. The vital question rather is, granted that this world is as nothing compared with the glories of the "new heavens and new earth," what is our attitude toward this present life? If it is one of passive submission to its inequalities and evils, if it consists in mere separatism from all but a necessary minimum of its activities, whilst regarding it in the final analysis as hopelessly contaminated, inevitably and swiftly tobogganing to its own destruction, and if heaven connotes naught but "the meager negative hope of personal escape from wrath to come,"* - this type of otherworldliness Calvin and the Christian Gospel are at one in condemning. But if the Church is essentially active in its attitude toward the world, striving to mould it according to the will of our Father, using every atom of its energy to assure that God's will is done on earth as it is in Heaven, in other words like John the seer visualising all things "sub specie aeternitatis," such otherworldliness is of the very essence of Christianity. In the case of Calvin this was preeminently true. Nothing is more characteristic of the Reformer

* A striking phrase from Hugh Falconer's, "The Unfinished Symphony" p. 191.

than his freedom from eschatological pessimism. He had a view to the ultimate heavenly goal, he was imbued with "telic enthusiasm," but this attitude found its outlet in one of the supreme attempts of the ages to insure that the will of God is made regnant in all spheres of this present life. The otherworldliness of Calvin, far from being a mere ascetic goal serving to dampen Christian activity in the present life, was rather the compass by which he sought to steer the earthly activities of the Christian and the Church.*

Our next concern is to examine more specifically the attacks which have been levelled at the Calvinistic ethic. There has been of late years much discussion as to whether Calvin was a creator or a mere epigone of the Middle Ages.** The thesis that he was

* Hugh Falconer (Ibid.) presents this view as his main thesis: "During the Christian centuries, East and West, the clearer men's vision of Heaven, the deeper their reverence for man; and this human reverence rooted in the intimated Will, yielded the noblest fruits of personal and social ethic What was the secret of this great public soul (Baxter of Kidderminster)? He himself tells us that it was telic. His practical rule was this: 'Spend five minutes every day in the New Jerusalem! Let a man practise his own presence in Heaven, and it will become a moral impossibility for him to envy, slander or hate his brother. Ills that must be borne he will bear with holy patience; but ills that should not for a moment be tolerated he will confront with a holy impatience. He will burn with white heat against man's inhumanity to man. The saint is a social reformer you may rely on to the last ditch. Beside the true Christian otherworldliness no social dynamic is worthy of mention. ... Probably, what the Church needs most is a baptism of what Mr. Benjamin Kidd, I think, has somewhere termed 'the colossal power of otherworldliness.' In the way of social amelioration this would accomplish more in a single generation than all the governments and Fourth Estates in Christendom combined." These phrases from "The Unfinished Symphony" (pp. 187 f., 192 f.) are, as it were, sympathetic vibrations from the harp of Calvin. Cp. Wernle's (p.344) significant phrase characterising Calvin's piety as "Die Wertung des Diesseitslebens am Ewigkeitsmasstab."

** For a fairly detailed critical account of this discussion see Doumergue's article in "C. and R."

the latter is founded to a large extent on his alleged affinity with later mediaeval ideals of asceticism. Historically this theory had its origin in the famous dictum of Ritschl: "So far as the ideal of Calvinism is anti-Catholic, this is due to the instigation of Luther; so far as it departs from Luther, it goes back to the ideal of the Franciscans - of the Franciscans and Anabaptists."* In the ethic of Calvinism Ritschl perceives an unmistakable approach to monastic flight from the world, a tendency further emphasised by Calvinism's alleged refusal to take part in the recreations and pleasures of the present life. The Lutheran ethic is thus exalted above that of Calvinism because of the alleged asceticism of the latter.

This assertion has not been without its appeal to Lutheran chauvinism, and its truth has been almost taken for granted in much German criticism. Schulze, Bess, Kattenbusch and even Loofs have built upon this dictum. It has come to be regarded as a truism that the ultimate source of Calvinistic asceticism is the Franciscan movement of the 13th century transferred to Calvin and the French Reformers through the instrumentality of French monachism. Does this not clearly exhibit itself in Calvin's zeal for discipline, in his legalistic spirit, in his antipathy toward recreation, art and the good things of this world? What Lutheranism left to the liberty of the spirit, Calvinism bound to the bondage of an ascetic legalism. As Bess states it: "Between Luther and Calvin there is the difference of the two nations which they represent, Germany and France. In France we have monachism

* "Gesch. d. Piet". I, 76-78, quoted Doumergue "C. and R." p. 1.

..... asceticism, the discipline of the masses; in Germany we have an almost morbid bent to individual liberty."*

Schulze traces Calvin's alleged monastic ideal of life back to the *Phaedo*, an attitude which finds an echo in Seeberg, who sees a "certain antique Platonizing idealism"***in Calvin's distrust of this world and longing for the world to come. Calvin's otherworldliness is at one with the teaching of Plato when as in the *Phaedo* he counsels withdrawal from the world, or of Socrates and his friends as they turn from earthly interests to dwell on things eternal. But even community of thought does not necessarily imply a cause and effect relationship, and it ought to be borne in mind that Calvin's Humanistic background was quite secondary and subsidiary to the ethical and spiritual principles of the Bible. It is a mistake to look beyond these limits for the basis of Calvin's piety, for above any man of his age he was thoroughly Biblio-centric in his thought and ideals. Zwingli might open the gates of heaven to heathen like Hercules, Theseus and Socrates; Erasmus might relate Plato and Christ, Calvin never! It is extremely unlikely, if not unthinkable, that Plato's ethics should have had any determining influence upon Calvin. An even more unsympathetic criticism prevails in the case of Professor Hall of Union Seminary, who speaks of the ethical system of Calvin as profoundly reactionary, "singularly bare in ethical work; even her casuistry poor and feeble"*** regarding which Doumergue, not without justice, caustically remarks "ridiculous."

* "Unsere religiösen Erzieher" (*Seine Gesch. des Christentums* in *Lebensbildern*, 1908, p. 71) quoted Doumergue, *Ibid.* p. 5 ff.

** Seeberg, p. 563. Against this see Bohatec, "*Calvinstudien*" p.428.

*** Doumergue, *Ibid.* 6 f.

For our purpose, however, the most significant criticism of Calvin's piety has been made by Ernst Troeltsch, the philosopher - theologian of Heidelberg. Ritschlian in spirit, he has built upon the famous dictum of his master,* yet with very important alterations. True it is, asserts Troeltsch, that Calvinism perpetuates the ascetic spirit of later mediaevalism, but it is not alone in this. Certainly Lutheranism is not to be exalted above Calvinism for this reason, because it shares this unenviable position with its younger contemporary. Both are creatures of the mediaeval age; indeed the modern age cannot be properly be said to have begun until the struggles for freedom during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The two branches of Protestantism simply represent different types of asceticism, and he quite frankly asserts that of the two types Calvinistic asceticism is much to be preferred to the Lutheran variety. In substance, Troeltsch's thesis maintains the kinship of Protestantism as a whole with mediaeval ideals, a point of view which he attempts to substantiate by appeal to various parallels between the two periods, especially their alleged common asceticism. Troeltsch of course admits that Protestantism "abolished monasticism and the monastising of the clergy."** Yet he avers that this did not lead to a denial of the essence of asceticism.

* While quoting Ritschl's dictum with approval, yet Troeltsch avers that : "Herleitung und Begriffsbestimmung dieser calvinistischen Askese ist nun aber bei ihm ganz ungenügend, beinahe komisch." ... "Soziallehren", Note 336, p. 645. Cp. Troeltsch's address of 1906, "Die Bedeutung des Prot. für die Entstehung der modernen Welt"; also "Soziallehren" Vol. I, pp. 427 643-652. 194 and his "Protestantism and Progress" pp. 74-88.

** Tr. "P. and P." p. 75.

It is important that one understand the sense in which Troeltsch uses the word "asceticism." Much criticism of his thesis might thus have been spared. Troeltsch admits that in common usage "it has become customary to describe as ascetic, an ethic and outlook on the world which rest on the sharp antithesis of the here and the hereafter and consequently treat the present reality as an earthly vale of tears."* He repudiates this as too restricted a use of the word and avers that the original, wider and more proper use of the term denotes "only a possible, but by no means necessary, consequence of this view of things: systematic practise in the renunciation and overcoming of the world." In the latter sense Protestantism is also ascetic. Although it admits certain secular motives, though it abolishes monasticism, it is nevertheless ascetic, "because it renounces the world inwardly and from inward motives and does not outwardly abandon it. In contrast with Catholic asceticism, which expressed itself in a life outside of and apart from the world, this may be described as an 'intramundane' asceticism."** The spirit of asceticism remains much the same in both, though its expression is ^{or extramundane} supramundane in the case of Catholicism and "intramundane" in the case of Protestantism.

* Ibid., p. 79 f.

** Ibid. 80. Troeltsch borrows this term from Max Weber. The phrase has become so closely associated with Troeltsch's thesis regarding the essential mediaeval character of Protestantism that its genesis in Weber's treatise on the basis and spirit of capitalism has been too far overlooked. Cp. Chapter VIII of the present discussion.

There was a double meaning to the asceticism of the mediaeval Church, and Catholicism fostered both types; first, a metaphysical condemnation of the world, and second, a systematic discipline of sense.* Through its institution of monachism Catholicism found place both for the development of asceticism as well as the work-a-day activities of life. There ensued a double plane of Christian morality, one for the ascetic, another for the common Christian. This was intolerable to Protestantism which once and for all destroyed the whole system of monasticism.

Yet Protestantism in its two branches perpetuates the two types of the ascetic spirit. The metaphysical depreciation of this world of sin becomes the voice of Lutheranism, which deplores this vale of tears, which stresses self-abnegation and submission, a patient endurance of the trials and evils of the present life with a view to the glories of the next, yet would enjoy in a thankful spirit the good things which God deigns to send men in this world. Such an asceticism has no need of legalism or monastic organisation because all is left to the liberty and conscience of the individual Christian. Calvinism on the other hand continues the second type of asceticism, the methodistic discipline of sense. What Lutheranism leaves to the conscience of the individual, Calvinism seeks to accomplish by a more systematic, legalistic discipline. It is too logical in spirit to deny the world in principle and to enjoy it in particular cases. Neither can it continue the quietistic spirit of Lutheran submission. It is too

* Tr. "Soziallehren," 645 ff.

essentially active to adopt a laissez-faire policy toward the evils, trials and inequalities of this life, and to quietly await the perfect blessedness of the future world. Its spirit is that of the crusader rather than of the martyr, of the Jesuit rather than of the Franciscan ascetic. The Reformed asceticism, like all Calvinism, is "active and aggressive, desires to reshape the world to the glory of God, (it) will with all diligence create and maintain a Christian commonwealth. To this end it rationalises and disciplines, in its ethical theory and Church-disciplinary instruction, the whole of action."* Yet to regard the world as an end per se is worship of the creature instead of the Creator, and hence unthinkable for Calvinism. Its aggressive tendency renders impossible the submissive outlook of Lutheranism. Both are essentially otherworldly, the one stressing a passive, the other an active attitude toward the present life. Thus, Troeltsch asserts, "there arises, in addition to an unresting activity and strict severity, a systematic completeness and a Christian-social trend in the spirit of Calvinistic ethics."** Action for the glory of God and the furtherance of His Church becomes the keynote of Calvinistic piety. Overcome the world, shape it, control it for Him! Make God's will the supreme guide for every phase of human life!

* Tr. "P. and P." 83.

** Ibid. 84. Seeberg (563), though by no means favourable to the general trend of Troeltsch's conclusions, none the less recognises that the otherworldliness of Calvinism, far from paralysing its active nature furnishes a powerful motive with which to energize earthly activity. "The more men feel themselves inwardly free from the good things of this world, the more vigorous will the consciousness of the mastery over it appear and the more surely will the practical result of this issue in life."

This is an admirable presentation of the Calvinistic ideal of life, and if Troeltsch wishes to call this intramundane asceticism, no one may object, if it be carefully noted what he means by the term, except as Doumergue naively asks: "Does not the adjective here devour the substantive?"* One cannot but question the wisdom of using the term asceticism to denote an ideal of thought and life quite different from the meaning which usage accords to the term. It may rightly be called asceticism in distinction from worldliness, Libertinism and materialism of every type, but it must be borne in mind that it is an asceticism diametrically opposed to the ideas which this term usually connotes. There is no monachism, no withdrawal from the world, no flagellation, no denial for the mere sake of denial, no regarding this world as a hopeless vale of tears, not even passive submission, but ceaseless activity for the sake of Christ and His Church.

As Troeltsch uses the term, this ideal of life is asceticism in that it does not coincide with the "mental atmosphere of the Renaissance, or the glorification of the world in modern poetry, or, again, as the sphere of modern technical achievements."** It is ascetic because it is not in tune with the modern life of the world. In substance it is as if Protestantism were reproached for being ascetic because it refuses to make the present life

* Doumergue, "C. and R." p.16.

** Tr. Ibid. 81.

an end in itself. But to do so would be to become a traitor to the New Testament ideal of life. True, Christianity never can and never will abdicate its throne to materialism of any stamp even though it be dubbed ascetic because of its obduracy.

Nor is Troeltsch justified in asserting that Protestantism is inevitably ascetic because "a supernatural redemption from a corrupted and God-abandoned natural condition of things is the fundamental idea of Protestantism."* At least this is not true of Calvin. Corrupted the world is, "with a great admixture of evil"** but not God-abandoned. Troeltsch's statement is a very dangerously phrased half-truth. According to Calvin natural things do require supernatural redemption, but as the Reformer is careful to say, even the physical world affords men a revelation of God, which, though quite insufficient in itself, yet exhibits "bright lamps lighted up to show forth the glory of its Author..... there is no portion of the world, however minute, that does not exhibit at least some sparks of beauty; while it is impossible to contemplate the vast and beautiful fabric as it extends around, without being overwhelmed by the immense weight of glory."*** He recognises a certain light of truth in the natural man; he sees in every man a seed of religion, a consciousness of God; he acknowledges the worth of the manual and liberal

* Ibid. 82.

** Inst. III, ix, 1.

*** Inst. I, V, 1, 14. Calvin, however, goes so far as to assert that as a matter of fact on account of our stupidity "we derive no benefit" from such manifestations of God "in the mirror of his works" Ibid. Sec. 11.

arts, of philosophy, medicine and mathematics. "If we reflect that the Spirit of God is the only fountain of truth, we will be careful, as we would avoid offering insult to Him, not to reject or contemn truth wherever it appears. In despising the gift we insult the Giver."* The natural condition of things, this world and the present life, insufficient, yes, utterly insufficient in themselves, but God-forsaken, never! Calvin is preeminent among the Reformers in his recognition of God's grace wherever it appears. No theologian or preacher ever more strenuously insisted on the necessity for a supernatural redemption, yet coupled with this we find in ^{him} a deep appreciation of the worth of this present life, and a real passion to remake this world according to the will of God as expressed in Scripture.**

Let us now consider whether Calvin's life and writings justify the criticism that he and his system were in the final analysis ascetic. One of the best balanced, most practical and inspiring chapters of the Institutes is that in which Calvin treats of the Christian's use of the present life.*** It is a refreshing and invigorating exposition, of as much force to-day as ever. One

* Inst. II, ii, 15.

** August Lang not improperly cautions his readers against a too ready acceptance of the general schemes and catch-words which Troeltsch proposes, asserting that little value is to be attributed to them, and that "for the most part they merely help partisans to establish one-sided judgments." "C. and R." p. 93.

*** Inst. III, x.

cannot help but question if some of the cutting criticisms which have been passed on Calvin's piety fiercely rigorous, reactionary, monastic, unappreciative of art and nature would ever have been written had their authors given careful consideration to this and similar passages. If those who have pictured Calvin as a grim ascetic with hatred for the things of this world, with nothing but disdain for the "best" of life, its art, music, recreation and the aesthetic in general, - if such knew Calvin as he reveals himself here and in his letters, the world would have been spared many a degrading caricature of one of its noblest men.

Calvin here reveals his ideal for the Christian life, an ideal not in contradiction but complementary to that expressed in the foregoing chapter. It is true that the present life is to be regarded as of little consequence in comparison with the world to come, and yet it must in no sense be contemned. Life is a pilgrimage and we are hastening to the heavenly Kingdom. As we pass through the world we should not regard the blessings of earth as ends in themselves, and should use them only in so far as they assist our progress. It is significant that Calvin admits that there are such blessings, and that they are to be used. Inasmuch, says the Reformer, as "this is a slippery place, and there is great danger of falling on either side" a middle course should be followed by the Christian. He must beware both of the unrelenting austerity of monkish asceticism, and also of carnal intemperance and licentiousness. With a touch of humour and keen insight he

warns against the first extreme: "There have been some good and holy men who, when they saw intemperance and luxury perpetually carried to excess, if not strictly curbed, and were desirous to correct so pernicious an error, imagined that there was no other method than to allow corporeal goods only in so far as they were necessities: a counsel pious indeed, but unnecessarily austere; for it does the very dangerous thing of binding consciences in closer fetters than those in which they are bound by the word of God. Moreover, necessity, according to them, was abstinence from everything that could be wanted, so that they held it scarcely lawful to make any addition to bread and water."*

Again in his discussion of Christian Liberty he says very pointedly: "... we are not bound before God to any observance of external things which are in themselves indifferent when once the conscience is entangled in the net, it enters a long and inextricable labyrinth from which it is afterwards most difficult to escape. When a man begins to doubt whether it is lawful for him to use linen for sheets, shirts, napkins and handkerchiefs, he will not long be secure as to hemp, and will at last have doubts as to tow; for he will revolve in his mind whether he cannot sup without napkins, or dispense with handkerchiefs. Should he deem a daintier food unlawful, he will afterwards feel uneasy for using loaf-bread and common eatables, because he will think that his body might possibly be supported on a still meaner

* Ibid. Sec. 1.

food. If he hesitates as to a more genial wine, he will scarcely drink the worst with a good conscience; at last he will not dare to touch water if more than usually sweet and pure. In fine, he will come to this, that he will deem it criminal to trample on a straw lying in his way all external things (are) subject to our liberty, provided the nature of that liberty approves itself to our minds as before God..... We are to use the gifts of God without scruple of conscience, without any perturbation of mind, for the purpose for which He gave them."* Could anything be less expressive of monastic asceticism, or even of the ascetic spirit in its broader sense?

The Reformer is fully as outspoken in his condemnation of the other extreme of licentiousness, and hence presents a golden mean "... we err not in the use of the gifts of Providence when we refer them to the end for which their Author made and destined them." Not only ^{is} this idea noteworthy in itself, but becomes doubly so when we consider Calvin's conception of this "end." "if we consider for what end He created food, we shall find that He consulted not only for our necessity, but also for our enjoyment and delight. Thus, in clothing, the end was, in addition to necessity, comeliness and honour; and in herbs, fruits and trees, beside their various uses, gracefulness of appearance and sweetness of smell. Has the Lord adorned flowers with all the beauty which spontaneously presents itself to the eye, and the sweet odour which delights the sense of smell, and shall it be

* Ibid. III, xix, 7, 8.

unlawful for us to enjoy that beauty and this odour? Has He not given qualities to gold and silver, ivory and marble, thereby rendering them precious above other metals or stones? In short has He not given many things a value without having any necessary use? Have done then with that inhuman philosophy which, in allowing no use of the creatures but for necessity, not only maliciously deprives us of the lawful fruit of the divine beneficence, but cannot be realised without depriving man of all his senses, and reducing him to a block."* Strangely incongruous are these words from the pen of an inflexible rigourist. And it were easy to multiply such expressions, for they occur not only in the Institutes, but are not infrequently met with in his letters and commentaries.**

Self-denial? Yes, at times, but never self-denial for its own sake in the sense of Roman asceticism. There is to be self-discipline, to be sure, but as Calvin uses the term it is a positive, not a negative ideal. In essence it involves the yielding of the thoughts, emotions and will to God. The *via media* which Calvin so carefully steers between Libertinism and asceticism reveals a similar theocentric motive. We are to remember that

* Ibid. III, x, 2, 3. Cp. III, xix, 9, where our grim ascetic adds the words: "nor was it ever forbidden to laugh, or to be full, or to add new to old and hereditary possessions, or to be delighted with music, or to drink wine." We rather suspect Calvin would have found the company of ascetics most distasteful, and at times even embarrassing.

** That Calvin was not insensible to the beauties of Nature about Geneva is indicated by a letter written to Monsieur de Falais. Letters, II, 83, 261, f. Cp. A. M. Hunter, 272 f. and Wernle, 349. Moreover, as Doumergue indicates ("C. and R." p. 45) Calvin's characterisation of the body as a prison (see Inst. III, iii, 14, 20; ix, 4.) does not in the least justify Schulze's criticism that

the purpose of the gifts of God is to enable us to know the Creator, and to be grateful to Him.* What a penetrating insight is herein revealed; how spiritual the motive! Is this pleasure a legitimate one? The Christian need only ask: does it reveal God? Does it cause me to be thankful to Him? If so it is truly a gift of God designed for His children. Each bit of life is thus as it were snatched up into the audience chamber where the soul communes alone with its God.

It must be admitted that the Reformer himself lived rather an austere life, beset as he was with ill health, constant struggles and bitter misunderstandings. But it is to misread fact and misinterpret motive to paint Calvin as an ascetic. His was a life lived in the world for the sake of the Church, his fellow-men, and the glory of the sovereign God. Not that Calvin in any sense looked upon the good things of this life as ends in themselves. He would no more be a worldling than he would a Simeon Stylites. But it is difficult to have patience with some critics who reproach him for his strenuous severity, as if he had chosen at will the circumstances midst which he lived. His life was lived at so

Calvin is an ascetic in that he expresses contempt for the body. His expressions are simply those of Paul (Romans vii:24). As well accuse the first missionary of monastic asceticism. In the case of Calvin there is no hint of ascetic flagellation or abasement of the body, but rather reverence for it as a temple of God's Spirit. It may well be no mere accident that Calvinistic peoples such as the Dutch and Swiss are noted the world over for their meticulous cleanliness.

* Inst. III, x, 3.

critical a period of the world's history that he could not take full advantage of the delights of this world which he himself classed as gifts of God to be enjoyed by His children.* Undoubtedly Protestants to-day may well be more liberal in their attitude toward the present life. Modern poetry, the development of science and art have made it possible for us to recognise a fuller revelation of God in nature than ever Calvin was willing to admit. Yet if to be modern mean to regard the material and physical as ends per se, the Christian will have no hesitation in taking his stand alongside Calvin, asserting that never may the creature be substituted for the Creator, that God alone is sovereign, He alone the Supreme End.

The Church of Calvin thus refuses to be bound to an outworn system of monastic asceticism; neither will it ally itself with the sectaries in their timid separatism from all worldly contacts; much less will it embrace the materialism of the sensualist, the Libertine or the sceptic; nor will it even admit the negativism so characteristic of the Lutheran communion. In accord with the typical Calvinistic piety it feels itself not only free but impelled to partake in the life of the world. Frankly and without

* Professor H. Bavinck of the Free University, Amsterdam, ("C. and Ref." p. 122) apropos of such criticisms very properly asserts: "On considering the times in which Calvin lived, the persecution and oppression to which the Reformation was exposed in well-nigh every country, the bodily and mental suffering the Reformer himself had to endure, ... we cannot wonder that he exhorts the faithful before all to the exercise of humility and submission, to patience and obedience, to self-denial and cross-bearing ... It does not speak favourably for the depth and intensity of our spiritual life if we are inclined to find fault with Calvin, the other Reformers and the martyrs of the Church for the alleged one-sidedness of their faith. It should rather excite our admiration, that in the midst of such circumstances, they so largely kept still an eye open for the positive vocation of the Christian."

equivocation it throws in its lot with the life of men, and seeks to bring that life into conformity with a definite, external standard. Where men work and suffer and sin there it will be to interpret the will of God. More than that, it will overcome the world, though not in the sense of mediaeval asceticism, but rather that it will use every sanction at its disposal to insure that men actually comply with the Divine commands. It seeks not to control in its own right as did the hierarchy, but bends every nerve to bring all phases of human life into conformity with the will of God explicit in Scripture. In short it would refashion the world according to this standard. In its hands the spiritual message remains substantially at one (in accord with the ethic sketched above) with that of Lutheranism, but with daring insistency it engages in the application of such a message not alone to the life of the individual in his relation to God, but also to the problems of moral, social, political and even economic life. So Calvinism expanded the horizon of Protestantism and in its many-sided activities virtually sought to make of this world a veritable Kingdom of God.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHURCH AND THE POLITICAL SPHERE

Mediaeval Catholicism had not only constituted the Church supreme in religious affairs, but in civil matters as well. The Pope was not only Christ's vice-regent upon earth. The Decretals had incorporated the fiction of the Donation of Constantine, investing the Papacy with temporal power. This temporal power came to be regarded as including both direct rulership over the States of the Church and a semi-protectorate over all nations, in the sense that sovereigns in the final analysis were confirmed in their stations by the Pope. While of course the technical distinction between the spiritual and temporal still persisted, and while secular government was indeed recognised as legitimate, yet as an extreme measure the Pope might depose kings and free subjects of their allegiance. As to which of the two powers was supreme, the fiction of the Donation of Constantine, coupled with religious veneration and popular superstition easily granted victory to the Papacy. It was no mere accident of history that Henry IV must do penance at Canossa before the mighty Hildebrand. Rather did it come as the culmination of a studied effort to exalt the Papacy at the expense of the State. The additional fact that the Papacy claimed and won the right of immunity of clergy from civil courts firmly established this imperium in imperio.*

* V. Premantle, 182 f. "We have before us no longer a spiritual

This conception of the Papacy underwent modification even before the time of the Reformation. The substitution of civil for canon law and the growing spirit of national self-assertion incident to the Renaissance period tended very materially to weaken the temporal power of Rome. Luther was the legatee of this awakening nationalism among the Germans, and used it as a natural and effective ally in freeing the Church from the tyranny of the Papacy. The zeal of German princes for the new faith may be traced not solely to religious motives, but also to a canny insight that the Reformation afforded a capital excuse to break the stranglehold of the Church on the State. Extensive lands, vast ecclesiastical establishments, the wealth of the nations to a large extent lay under the control of a Church whose tentacles spread out like those of some huge octopus. An awakening nationalism worked in union with the revival of religious conviction, and the latter was led to trust the princes to break down the power of Catholicism and thus to free the soul from its grasp.

This union, however, proved itself productive of some unfortunate results. Once the power of the Papacy was broken, the new Church imperceptibly, but none the less surely, fell under the sway of State control in all things not exclusively spiritual, and often in this sphere as well. One sort of coercion was replaced by another type equally objectionable. Luther's own deep-seated conservatism and respect for authority, coupled with his idealism in limiting the work of the Church to the preaching of the word and a temporal power, but two rival temporal powers, each aspiring though on different grounds to universal dominion."

and administration of the sacraments, and a patient acquiescence in external conditions, - such influences served to strengthen the absolutism of the German princes and simply to invert the mediaeval relationship of Church and State. Little wonder that the better type of Catholic was repelled by the civil domination of ecclesiastical affairs exhibited in most Protestant lands. Was the Church of God to be prostituted to the point of making it a handmaiden, a mere tool of an absolutist State? A similar process occurred in German and French Switzerland, apart from Geneva, with the slight difference that it was the magistracies instead of princes who assumed such power. Calvin alone of all the early Reformers furnished the Church with^a bulwark against both types of tyranny, and as such his contribution is worthy a detailed study.

Before we treat of this, however, it is essential that we sketch the civil-ecclesiastical background of pre-Calvinistic Geneva. A grasp of the principles underlying the history of the Reformation in Geneva before Calvin and of general tendencies of Genevan life will prevent ill-judged valuation of Calvin's work.*

From the 12th century on Geneva was the bone of contention between the counts and bishops of the district, in which the latter proved victors. The 13th century witnessed the appearance of a third power, the rulers of Savoy. Called in originally to aid the bishops against the counts, the Savoyards entrenched themselves in Genevan affairs and wrested from the bishops the power of appointing the vicedominus of the city. The year 1387 marks

* A splendid sketch (in English) of this period is to be found in Williston Walker's "John Calvin," Chap. VII, based to a large

the beginning of constitutional government in Geneva, for it was then that the burghers won from the bishop the ancient Magna Carta of the city called "The Franchises." By this constitution the government of the city was divided between three distinct powers: the bishop or sovereign of the city called the "Prince of Geneva," the count or vicedominus, appointed by Savoy, and the free burghers. There was hopeless overlapping in the division of duties, with the burghers accorded decidedly inferior powers. We are not surprised to learn that a constant struggle ensued with the bishop and burghers opposed to the vicedominus.

The citizens gathered once annually in the General Assembly (Consilium Generale) to choose four syndics as their administrative representatives. From this germinal beginning the 15th century witnessed the development of the councillor system in Geneva. The Little Council was later increased to 25 in number. In 1457 the Council of 50 (later 60) was developed to deal with diplomatic affairs, and in 1527 the Council of 200 was organised according to the model of Bern and Fribourg.* The development of the councillor system was the expression of a growing interest in self-government. This was matched by a very significant tendency recognised and striven against by the burghers for the system to concentrate all power in the hands of a few carefully selected

extent on an even more detailed article by Professor H. D. Foster in the "Am. Hist. Review," viii, pp. 217-240. The latter article presents an illuminating account of this period with copious references to the original sources; cp. also Lindsay, Vol. II and Reyburn.

* Foster, 220.

men. A government ostensibly democratic thus crystallised into an aristocratic oligarchy. The Councils took over duties formerly the prerogative of the Consilium Generale, and the tendency was toward the mutual cooptation of councillors.* It is important to note that this was the trend of events prior to Calvin's arrival, not the result of his machinations.

By the opening of the 16th century the oppression of the House of Savoy became more acute, due to the union of the two offices of bishop and vicedominus in one person, Count Amadeus VIII of Savoy, Pope and subsequently Bishop of Geneva. In desperation at this disregard of "The Franchises" the Genevese burghers turned toward their Swiss neighbours for assistance. The first alliance, that with Fribourg, was formed in 1519 and a second with Bern in 1526. However, far more significant than the temporary security thus obtained, was the influence of Bern upon Geneva. This city had become the zealous leader of the Protestant cause in 1528. When its soldiers entered Geneva in 1530 they were accompanied by preachers. Bern, being the stronger and more outspoken of its allies, it is natural that Geneva looked to it rather than to Fribourg. In other words, official toleration of the Reformation

* In 1459 the election of the Council of 50 was transferred from the Consilium Generale to the Little Council; from 1530 on, aside from the four syndics and treasurer elected annually by the Consilium Generale, the Little Council was elected by the Council of 200, and the 200 made up of the Little Council and 175 others chosen by it. As Foster pointedly remarks: "Aristocratic tendencies in Geneva appear not with Calvin, but during the three generations preceding his arrival." Foster, 221.

in Geneva was in its incipency more a matter of political expediency than of religious conviction. In spite of the fact that only a very small proportion of its population were Protestants, Genevan authorities dared not offend Bern by silencing the preachers or removing the Placards advocating the new faith. Nor on the other hand could they too openly welcome the Reformation lest Fribourg, their Catholic ally, withdraw her aid. To soothe Bern without outraging Fribourg was no easy task. Since political expediency must be their guide it is little wonder that the Council's straddle of the religious issue brought forth some innocuous and pathetic pronouncements.*

In 1532 William Farel, the prophet of French Switzerland, accompanied by Saunier and Olivétan came to Geneva to preach the evangel. On being driven out by the still powerful clerical leaders, Farel commissioned Froment to carry on the work under guise of teaching French. A few months later the Council of 200 decreed that its permission or that of the vicar must be procured before any one might preach. At this juncture the city was in uproar, and in rapid succession the old Bishop returned and fled, Furbity, a Dominican preacher arrived, and also Farel and Viret,

* e.g. "Regarding him who preaches the Gospel, ordered that for the present the master of the schools cease reading the Gospels and that the vicar be requested to order that in all the parishes and convents they preach the Gospel and epistle of God according to truth, without mingling with it any fables or other human inventions, and that we live in harmony as our fathers have done without any inventions." - Herminjard, "Corr. de Ref." II, 425, N.2, quoted Foster, 224.

Protestant preachers. The Protestants appealed to Bern, the Catholics to Fribourg. A plot to poison the Protestant preachers, Bern's demand that Geneva break her alliance with Catholic Fribourg, the holding (with the support of Bern) of a public disputation on religion resulting in a Protestant victory, the practical assistance of Bernese soldiers in ridding Geneva's environs of Savoyard troops, - such events clearly indicate that in the early days of the Reformation, religious and political considerations were hopelessly entwined. As Foster neatly sums it up: "When the choice was pressed upon her by her two opposing allies, and by the parties fighting within the city, Geneva declared against bishop and papal abuses in favor of Bern and the 'word of God,' two authorities which could be appealed to against both ecclesiastical domination and corruption."* In short, while a genuine attachment to the new faith aroused by the Protestant preachers undoubtedly affected the Council, in the main its policy was one dictated by political considerations.

Another, and for our purpose more important tendency in pre-Calvinistic Geneva was the Council's assumption of ecclesiastical powers. From the earliest tremors of the approaching Reformation it was the Council which took the matter in hand of composing religious differences and legislating on religious questions. This tendency was accelerated by the fact that the bishop fled and with Savoy took up arms against the city. Hence the office of bishop was declared vacant. A judge there must be in such

* Foster, 224.

matters, so in lieu of an authoritative bishop the magistracy assumed the position of arbiter. Between 1528 and 1534 the Council became the sole effective governing force in Geneva, both in civil and ecclesiastical matters. Throughout these years the Registres du Conseil are cluttered with pronouncements on religious questions. In 1533 the Council announced that it would keep within its control the license to preach. In 1535 the Council of 200 suspended the mass, took over all ecclesiastical property, and established a hospital with the proceeds. In 1536 Bern reluctantly acknowledged the right of the syndics to take over the full powers of bishop and vicedominus. Even the veto powers of the Consilium Generale were materially curbed. Thus Geneva under a general alliance with Bern not only attained her independence, but the entire civil, judicial, religious and moral jurisdiction was transferred en toto to the magistracy of the city.

From this there could issue but one result, the complete control of the Church by the magistracy, a caeseropapism as rigid as any Bern, Zurich or Germany ever saw. A government but recently emancipated and for the first time fully independent of both duke and bishop would not readily admit any diminution of its hard-earned powers. It is apparent that Farel left to himself would never have opposed this tendency. Calvin fought a lonely battle to free the Church and to win for it its spiritual autonomy. Such was the stage when Calvin appeared. In all human probability apart from him the Reformed Church of the West would have followed

closely in the footsteps of its German Swiss and Lutheran brethren in subjecting itself to State control.

Another significant event was the fact that the 1536 decision for the Reformation was in the form of a resolution by a general assembly of Genevan citizens, wherein they voiced their determination "to live in this holy evangelical law and word of God, as it has been announced to us, desiring to abandon all masses, images, idols and all that which may pertain thereto."* Thus was attested the fact that in the minds of the people Church and State were coterminous as to their component members. Such a conception dominated Genevan thought, and is the background with which alone one can properly value Calvin's work.

In Geneva the decision of the Council and of a majority of the citizens took the place of a decision by an absolutist prince as in Germany. But in either case no provision whatsoever was made for the recognition or protection of the strong Catholic minority. Thus the doors were thrown open to every type of excess. With the Council establishing creeds and religious regulations any deviation from them became disobedience to the sovereign law, heresy became a crime against the State, and the Catholic was not so much a mistaken zealot to be convinced of the truth, as a traitor to be condemned. An understanding of this principle goes far toward explaining future developments in Geneva.

* Registres du Conseil, XXIX, 112, quoted Walker, 179.

A final influence of this pre-Reformation period which undoubtedly had its effect upon Calvin, was the legacy of "grandmotherly legislation" with which the statute books of Geneva, in common with most mediaeval cities, were encumbered. Such suffice to show that the supposedly typical offensive note in Calvinistic Puritanism not only had its counterpart but probably its source as well in pre-Calvinistic Geneva. Minute regulations were already in force circumscribing the citizen's every activity.*

The Genevan Council simply continued to play the role of a prying meddler, as had been done for centuries by Church and State. This is likewise true of intolerance. To condone religious opinions different from those of the State was in the same category as permitting criminal actions to go unpunished. Freedom of conscience the State viewed as inimical to public security, tolerance as an open invitation to insubordination and treason.**

* V. Foster, 230 f. There were laws against playing in public places during Church services, against certain dances, oaths, playing at cards, blasphemy, etc.

** Not even Jean Balard, an old patriot and honoured magistrate could escape the condemnation of the Council because he was unwilling to say that the mass was bad. All that he pled for was freedom of conscience. "He gave the quaint and pathetic reply 'that he is unable to judge, but since it is the will of the Little and Grand Council that he should say the mass is bad, he says the mass is bad, and that he is worse to judge boldly of that of which he is ignorant, and he cries to God for mercy, and renounces Satan and all his works' but the Council was not content and wanted a categorical answer, so he finally said: 'the mass is bad.'" The significant thing is that Balard's first hearing occurred before Calvin's arrival, and his last during Calvin's exile when the Reformer's enemies were in control. Reg. du Con. Vol. XXXIII, 400 ff. quoted Foster, 232 f. It may be suggested that it was precisely this legacy of "grandmotherly legislation" which furnished Calvinism with the impulse to take account of every detail of life and to strive to impose the rule of the word of God on all men. Yet were this true, inasmuch as all mediaeval cities engaged in a similar minute supervision of the private life of individuals, in every city

These general observations should be borne in mind lest we misjudge Calvin. Such was Geneva as he found it: a councillor government gradually developing into an aristocratic oligarchy, a reformation begun in which political expediency had far outrun religious conviction, all ecclesiastical powers and much of the tyranny of the bishop concentrated in the hands of the magistracy, a Church coterminous with the State, and a legacy of "grandmotherly legislation" and intolerance vitiating the life of the Republic. Some of this Calvin changed; some he did not, but he was never entirely free from these influences. In Geneva the Reformation had been negative rather than positive; the Church did not own its own property; the State appointed the pastors, payed their stipends, regulated their teaching, even assayed to control the individual conscience. The new faith was not as yet the religion of the people. Farel and Viret had done the pioneering, but only the outer framework of a Church had been reared, and even it trembled under the thumb of the magistracy. Little wonder is it that in terse phrases Calvin wrote: "When I first came to this Church, I found almost nothing at all. There was preaching and that was all. They would look out for idols, it is true, and they burned them. But there was no reformation. Everything was in disorder."* So was the stage set for the arrival of the young Reformer of only twenty-seven years,^{he} whose name is for all time inextricably bound with that of Geneva.

of the Reformation we should witness the development of a like concern for the Christianisation of all life, a tendency which is, however, strikingly true of Geneva alone. The development of this broader ideal must rather be traced to Calvin himself.

* Letters, IV, 373.

Having glanced at current conceptions we shall now direct our attention to Calvin's theory of the State. Calvin admits that ostensibly the institution of civil government may not seem to bear any relation to the spiritual doctrine of faith, but that it is necessary to consider it "while, on the one hand, frantic and barbarous men (the Anabaptists) are furiously endeavouring to overturn the order established by God, and, on the other, the flatterers of princes, (probably referring to the German Swiss and Lutherans) extolling their power without measure, hesitate not to oppose it to the government of God."* In opposition to the former Calvin argues that Christian liberty does not involve anarchism or separatism from legitimate civil authority on the ground that it is external and polluted. From such a view Calvin is careful to disassociate himself. Civil government is not a matter of indifference; it is appointed by God; the magistrates are servants of God, "invested with divine authority, and, in fact, represent the person of God, as Whose substitutes they in a manner act Wherefore no man can doubt that civil authority is, in the sight of God, not only sacred and lawful, but the most sacred, and by far the most honourable, of all stations in mortal life."**

* Inst. IV, xx, 1.

** Ibid. Sec. 4.

The sense of being chosen of God for a civil office, far from involving freedom from responsibility, rather engenders respect for the office as a trust, as a stewardship. In truth, accountability to God is all the greater the more important the office. "What zeal for integrity, prudence, meekness ought to sway those who know that they have been appointed ministers of the divine justice! How will they dare admit iniquity to their tribunal, when they are told that it is the throne of the living God? How will they venture to pronounce an unjust sentence with that mouth which they understand to be an ordained organ of divine truth? With what conscience will they subscribe impious decrees with that hand which they know has been appointed to write the acts of God? In a word they are the vice-regents of God They have an admirable source of comfort when they reflect that they are not engaged in profane occupations, but in a most sacred office, inasmuch as they are the ambassadors of God."*

In the minds of pious men such as the young Edward VI, Prince Maurice, Cromwell and the like, such words afforded not only comfort but an undoubted stimulus to a righteous use of their powers. In the case of others less noble, such a theory of divine right was often only an excuse for greater tyranny and oppression. In proportion to the amount of popular control such dangers decrease, but so, alas, also too often does the sense of civil office as a stewardship, likewise decrease. A revival of the latter concep-

* Ibid. IV, xx, 6.

tion, stripped as it is now of its power to do harm, would even in our day be a powerful lever for righteousness.

Calvin thus reveals himself as at one with Luther in restoring to the magistrates a sense of the dignity of their office as servants of God, investing with religious sanction the new nationalistic movement. Rome had in theory admitted the sacredness of the secular office, but from Hildebrand on this idea had fallen into disrepute, and the Papacy even went so far as to assert that the source of such a theory lay in the effrontery of early rulers who had made themselves kings in opposition to the sacred rule instituted by Christ.

Although Luther likewise regarded civil government as a divine institution, there are certain very material differences between his conception and that of Calvin. Apart from viewing the State as the champion and protector of the true faith, Luther had an essentially negative attitude toward civil government. He drew a sharp distinction between the Kingdom of God under Christ and the kingdom of the world under the magistrate. The latter is evil; true it is necessary, but only to check evil, to assist the weak. The State is merely a negative, restraining force. Real Christians have no essential need of it; to them it is an indifferent matter; theirs it is simply to follow the Lord.

Calvin, on the other hand, had an essentially positive view of the State. While recognising the distinction between external civil government and the spiritual Kingdom of Christ, he maintained

that the Christian while a pilgrim on earth stands in need of such aids as the State can give, and "those who take them away from him rob him of his humanity," ... The use of civil government among men is "not less than that of bread and water, light and air, while its dignity is much more excellent."* This view will become increasingly apparent as we outline his conception of the purpose of the State and its relation to the Church. Calvin not only exalted the State by indicating its many God-given functions, but, unlike Luther, proceeded to find in the word of God more or less detailed principles to guide it in its work. Luther's negative conception of civil government kept him from meddling in secular affairs, but it tacitly admitted secular meddling in ecclesiastical affairs. Calvin's positive conception led him to assume an intelligent interest in all secular affairs, (his enemies called it meddling) but not for a moment to tolerate dictation from the State in ecclesiastical affairs. It seems paradoxical, but it is true that on the one hand depreciation of the State was accompanied by a progressive subservience of the Church to its control, while on the other hand its exaltation was accompanied by the spiritual autonomy of the Church.

In Calvin's mind there is a fundamental distinction between Church and State. His theory as propounded in the Institutes is built around the following analogy: "He who knows to distinguish between the body and the soul, between the present fleeting life

* Inst. IV, xx, 2, 3.

and that which is future and eternal, will have no difficulty in understanding that the spiritual Kingdom of Christ and civil government are things very widely separated it is a Jewish vanity to seek and include the Kingdom of Christ under the elements of this world"* This analogy, however, is subject to the important qualification, heretofore mentioned, regarding the sacred nature of the magistrate's office. It is true that in comparison with the soul's relationship to Christ external conditions are relatively unimportant. But to liken civil government to the body is not to degrade it as a thing polluted, nor ipso facto to imply that it is to be made subservient to the Church.** It is simply to recognise that the functions of the two differ. Though each is distinct and independent in its own sphere, both are sacred services, both are linked in a common purpose, the service and protection of men, and above all the furtherance of the Kingdom and glory of God.

In practise, however, Calvin's conception was coloured by the prosaic fact that he was the heir of the ages. Catholicism had not seen in Church and State two distinct organisations, but rather one body expressing itself in two functions. All men were at one and at the same time members of each. Luther had echoed a like conception, and we have seen how in Geneva a Church-Republic had been founded even before Calvin's arrival. The citizens met

* Ibid. Sec. 1.

** Certainly this passing reference in one section of the Institutes is not to be regarded as proof that Calvin intended to subject the State to the control of the Church.

in their General Assembly had approved of the Reformation through the regular legislative channels, and the magistracy had assumed full control over both the external and internal ordering of the Church.

It is not surprising therefore that one of Calvin's first requests when he came to Geneva was that a confession of faith be acknowledged openly by the magistrates, and that in groups of ten the citizens be required to give such an account of their faith "so that it may be understood who of them agree with the Gospel, and who love better to be of the Kingdom of the Pope than of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ ..it cannot yet be seen what doctrine each person holds, which is the right beginning of a Church."* Thus each person in Geneva simply because he was a citizen of that city must make his confession of faith. The purpose in view of course was not that individuals enter the Church by a voluntary confession, and that whoever did not wish to do so might remain outside with the protection of the State, but that heretics and criminals might be discovered. They would then be excommunicated, lose all civil rights, and possibly face banishment as well. Nothing could indicate more clearly that in the minds of Calvin and the magistrates the membership of the Church and the citizenry of the Republic were one and the same. Heretics were branded as criminals to whom short shrift was accorded. It is not particularly significant

* Opera, x, p. 11, quoted Walker, 187 f. Though the form of subscription was made more severe by the Council than Calvin had intended, he nevertheless granted his approval to the action. Fremantle (p. 209) informs us that 200 years later Rousseau could not establish his rights as a citizen of Geneva until he had signed this confession.

that Calvin embraced so large a portion of an age-old theory of the relation of Church and State which had dominated Europe for centuries. What should rivet our attention is the degree to which he succeeded in his efforts to insure the spiritual autonomy of the Church, while joining with Luther in stressing the autonomy of the State.

A general consideration of Calvin's life and especially his activity in Geneva as reflected in his letters leads to the inevitable conclusion that while in theory Calvin held to a clear distinction between Church and State, this was really a distinction in function, and that the two were for him almost, if not quite identical as to their constituent members. Both have the same end; both are governed by the same Book; both are answerable to one God; both offices are a sacred service, instituted by God and necessary to man. Yet this is not to infer that either State or Church is to be dependent on, much less absorbed by the other. Each is free and independent in its own sphere; neither is subservient nor an integral part of the other as an organisation. Church and State are separate; yet they are allies, to be of mutual assistance in the work of God; they are collateral, complementary, or, as the relationship was termed at a much later date, co-ordinate jurisdictions. Separatism as a chosen policy was entirely foreign to Calvin. Yet there are not lacking indications that he did not wholly approve of the Genevan relationship. At least he not unwillingly accepted other circumstances.

In Strassburg membership in the foreign, French refugee Church of which Calvin was pastor, was solely dependent upon an individual confession of faith, not upon an accident of birth.* Calvin not only accepted this condition with perfect complacency, but because of it was for the first time able to put into practice a species of Church discipline, which he had previously failed to establish in the Church-Republic of Geneva. It has often been observed that Calvin's conceptions work better in a free church, free either because it is a minority Church or because it is a Church under the cross of persecution as in France. Had conditions been likewise in Geneva, Calvin would doubtless have accommodated himself to them, but being what they were he attempted to carry into practice the other theory outlined above.

Calvin's attitude toward the Strassburg and Huguenot churches simply makes it clear that in his mind it is not essential for the establishment of a true Church that it possess as its constitutive members all the citizens of the State in which it is located. True, this is desirable, and, if circumstances permit, obligatory, with the proviso that such a union conserves full spiritual autonomy to the Church.

In other words, while a Church-Republic as in Geneva is a worthy example to be followed, Calvin's main concern is to see the Church established in all its purity and power, not to battle for any abstract theory of the ideal relation of Church and State.

* Cp. Werdermann 295, ff.

Theories per se play far less a part in Calvin's teaching and practise than critics or historians have allotted to them. To establish a living evangelical Church possessed of its complete spiritual autonomy, thus to safeguard the headship of Christ, and to promote the glory of God, - these were the goals Calvin insistently placed before his eyes. Means were purely secondary. State assistance was to be accepted, yea demanded, if feasible, but if such assistance were not forthcoming the central and fundamental task not only remained unimpaired, but was pressed on to with, if anything, even more vigour.

What then are to be the functions of the State? In view of the contemporary intimate relation between Church and State, the fact that the religious impulse is primary in Calvin's interest, and that he is not in any sense writing an abstract discourse on statecraft per se, we need not be surprised that his outline in the Institutes of the functions of civil government places in the foreground its duty toward organised religion. Calvin is thoroughly Lutheran in his contention that to the civil government it is assigned "... to foster and maintain the external worship of God, to defend sound doctrine and the condition of the Church"* It is true that this statement occurs in the midst of a polemic against the spiritual anarchism of the sects. Yet in all accounts of the duties of the State Calvin accords this prominent, sometimes even overshadowing emphasis. Thus: "Its object is that no idolatry, no blasphemy against the name of God, no calum-

* Inst. IV, xx, 2.

nies against His truth, nor other offences to religion, break out and be disseminated among the people in short that a public form of religion may exist among Christians."*

Conscious of the apparent inconsistency between this statement and his well-known contention that only a divine, not a man-made polity is to be tolerated in the Church,^{he} adds: "I no more than formerly allow men at pleasure to enact laws concerning religion and the worship of God, when I approve of civil order which is directed to this end, viz., to prevent the true religion, which is contained in the law of God, from being with impunity openly violated and polluted by public blasphemy."** The negative form of the foregoing statement is significant. Magistrates are accorded no position of unlimited privilege as ecclesiastical lawmakers. They are not to assume oversight of the Church in the sense of dictating its creeds or ceremonies, nor even to arbitrarily determine the external ordering of the Church. Their prerogatives and duties as related to the Church are most carefully circumscribed; they are to lead in the establishment, foster, maintain and defend the true Church, to guard it from schism, and most important of all, to prevent public abuses detrimental to its work.*** As proof of his contention Calvin cites the example of Old Testament saints such as Joseph, Moses, Joshua, the Judges and Daniel, who did not usurp the office of priests, but used their high positions

* Ibid. Sec. 3.

** Ibid. 3.

*** Cp. Tracts, Vol. I, lxii.

to forward true religion among the people. Magistrates are urged to pattern their actions after such noble examples. Theirs is to be a fatherly, benevolent protection, loath to interfere in the affairs of the Church, eager to avenge it of its enemies, - which it must be admitted is an impractical attitude little capable of realisation on our mundane sphere.

The State is thus, as with Luther, the "custos utriusque tabulae." Piety is to be its first care; "those laws are absurd which disregard the rights of God, and consult only for men."* It is as much a duty of the magistrate to protect religion and divine worship as it is to look after the common weal. In fact to limit his interest to the latter is pure folly, "as if God had appointed rulers in His own name to decide earthly controversies, and omitted what was of far greater moment, His own pure worship as prescribed by His law."**

As keeper of both tables of the law the State will of course also recognise as a duty the suppression of heresy. Very naively, however, Calvin is careful not to appeal to Catholic magistrates to suppress heretics according to their interpretation of the word. In reality the theory led not only to despicable intolerance, but in post-Calvin times issued in the almost complete control of the Church by the State. If the magistracy is to see that the Church in its sphere is such as keeps to the word of God, even if the supposedly perspicuous word be the ultimate standard, the inevitable tendency is for the magistrate to interpret it according to his own wishes, and hence to establish a State tyranny.

* Ibid. Sec. 9.

** Ibid. Sec. 9. Innumerable examples of such a theory are to be

As a matter of fact Calvin was very chary about appealing to civil authorities except those who were more or less favourable to the true evangelical religion, such as young Edward VI, Protector Somerset, the King of Poland, the magistrates of Bern, Zurich, etc. He undoubtedly considered it the duty of others to establish the true Church, and he addresses some to that effect, but in no great hope or expectation that they will do so. If princes favoured the evangelical religion he called on them to lead in the establishment of the true Church, and to suppress heresy; if they were opposed, he prevailed on the Church to reform itself, craved toleration for the Reformed faith and railed at officials for any interference. Calvin would if feasible invoke the protection and even leadership of the magistracy on behalf of the Church. Yet in practise this theory had to bow to something more vitally essential to his thought. When, even in his experience, as inevitably happened, the theory led to political meddling of unscrupulous magistrates in ecclesiastical affairs, Calvin was at once afire with righteous indignation. He might be inconsistent, but at any cost he would defend the spiritual autonomy of the Church, for this, to him, involved the very headship of Christ. In other words, Calvin's central interest was not the promulgation of any abstract theory regarding the relation of Church and State, but rather the establishment of the pure, evangelical religion. All else was secondary; and,

found in Calvin's letters to various kings, and princes and magistrates (v. Letters, II, 168, III, 78, 180, etc.). Wernle notes that in the later editions of the Institutes Calvin enlarges his teaching on the religious tasks of the State, and rightly attributes this deepening emphasis to the antipathy engendered in him by his contacts with the spiritual anarchism of the Anabaptists. Wernle. 161 ff.

moreover, it must be admitted that there are crises in the world's history when convictions are of more importance than consistency.

Naturally, even a Reformer will not seek to limit the function of civil government to the protection of the Church. Especially is this true of one like Calvin with his judicial training. Coupled with a virile, common-sense piety, this led him to take an intelligent and unfailing interest in the purely civil activities of the State. Even in a strictly religious book like the Institutes he took cognizance of the ordinary secular functions of the State. As the guardian of peace and tranquillity, as the vindicator of honesty, sobriety and industry, as the advocate of the poor, as the terror of the wicked and the avenger of the outraged and defenseless, the civil government will earnestly seek to promulgate and enforce just laws.* In such enforcement cruelty and unjust measures should be shunned, bearing in mind the essentially sacred nature of the civil office. Taxes and imports are of course legitimate revenues, but the State should remember that such funds are public money and not to be used for private indulgence. Calvin inadvertently reveals his humanity when he terms such revenues "almost the blood of the people."

Legal enactments are to be in general accord with the moral law of Moses. But that this involves slavish adherence to the temporary ceremonial and judicial laws of the Jews, to their definite decrees and punishments, and forbids usage of the common

* Inst. IV, XX, 2,3,9,10,13; III, xix, 15.

laws of nations, such an opinion Calvin characterises as "perilous, seditious, stupid and false."* The general principles of Scriptural enactments are indeed to be followed, but slavish attendance to details is unnecessary. In this at least Calvin will not be a legalist. "The law of God which we call moral is nothing else than the testimony of natural law, and of that conscience which God has engraven on the hearts of men."** As long as laws are formed on this basis divergence from Jewish law is unimportant. Calvin's Humanistic and judicial background thus enabled him to see the moral law in *Lex Naturae*, and to recognise the legitimacy of Roman law, keeping him from slavish literalism in regard to Jewish law. For this we may well be thankful.

However, this is not to minimize the sacred nature of the magistrate's office, his direct accountability to God, or even the conviction that in Scripture (apart from Jewish details) lies the supreme rule for all life. The general ethical principles therein contained and the moral law are eternal and binding in their authority. In the final analysis the word of God is the norm by which the magistrate should govern himself in all his activities.

The most enduring and significant note in Calvin's theory of Church and State is his insistent emphasis on the autonomy of

* Ibid. IV, XX, 14, 15.

** Ibid. Sec. 16. That this reference to natural law is incidental rather than that it displaces Scripture as the revealer of God's will in this as in all other spheres, is indicated in Lang's interesting study "Calvin and Natural Law," in "C. and R."

the Church. Whatever exceptions may be taken to Calvin's theology, most of which cannot be gainsaid unless one throw over the entire Christian faith, however much one may regret the extremes to which the application of his theory of Church and State led, in this central principle of the autonomy of the Church the Protestant world owes him an eternal debt of gratitude. Romanism, it is true, had championed the autonomy of the Church; but it was an autonomy which found unique expression in domination over the State, an autonomy which depended for its sanction and furtherance upon an hierarchical institutionalism, which emphasised with piercing intensity the distinction between the supernatural and the natural, sacred and profane, grace and nature, the clergy and the laity, the Church and the world, and in the final analysis depended upon the absolute power of the Pope, the chief of earth's rulers and the vice-regent of heaven. Such an autonomy was tyranny unspeakable to the soul, degrading to the Church, and thoroughly incompatible with civil freedom.

With the growth of the new nationalistic movement and the spread of Humanism we find the elements at hand for the formulation of an entirely different conception of ecclesiastical autonomy. Suffice it here to indicate that this conception assumed the following expression: absolute freedom and autonomy of the State untrammelled by any species of ecclesiastical domination, coupled with a somewhat vaguer spiritual autonomy of the Church. To the State was accorded the external ordering of the Church,

the correction of religious abuses and suppression of heresy. Whether in Lutheran Germany or Reformed German Switzerland the magistracy soon expanded the field of its activities to include far more than the external ordering of the Church. With the tacit consent of the Reformers the State gradually assumed authority to determine questions of ceremonies, choice of pastors and even creeds, not to speak of its seizure of ecclesiastical property. The magistracies of Bern, Zurich and even French-speaking Lausanne all assumed the prerogative of passing judgment on cases of excommunication from the Church. French Switzerland in general was fast following suit, and a rigid caesaropapacy controlled Geneva even during the leadership of Farel. In short pre-Calvinistic Protestantism had permitted the State to reduce the autonomy of the Church to a lifeless shadow which practically involved its total eclipse.

Some decades later (the theses of Erastus were published in 1568) this tendency was dignified into a theory, safeguarded, and promulgated as the ideal civil-ecclesiastical relationship. Erastianism maintained that when the ruler is a Christian, he is to be regarded as the "praecipium membrum" of the Church. Because of his position he is to oversee the external ordering of the Church, to insure that the word and sacraments are properly maintained, and in consultation with the clergy to administer discipline, in all things subject to the word of God. "We sum up thus, that in a Christian Commonwealth there is one universal ruler, to whom is committed by God the external government of all things which

belong either to the civil life or to the life of Christian piety; that the right and authority of rule and jurisdiction has not been committed to ministers or to any others."*

In theory such a system may be open to no inherent objection, but in practise the technical boundary line between external and spiritual matters fades away to such an extent that spiritual autonomy usually vanishes and civil coercive measures take its place. As a matter of fact Erastianism has proved itself a most questionable friend to the liberty and independence of the Church.

At the opposite extreme primitive separatism found its advocate among the Anabaptists. The latter included various shades of opinion, a minority favouring anarchism, the more conservative majority admitting that civil officers are of divine appointment. Nevertheless all held an essentially negative view of the State which denied its necessity so far as the life of the Christian is concerned, and in general considered it unbefitting for a Christian to assume the office of civil magistrate. Both spiritual and actual autonomy were thus conserved to the Church, but on the basis of a timorous separatism, a cost which Calvin was unwilling to pay.

Calvin it was who rescued for Protestantism the autonomy of the Church. He was too systematic a thinker to recognise the sacred nature of civil government, and then regard it as a secondary matter of indifferent importance to the Christian, as did Lutheranism. Much less could he share the holier-than-thou atti-

* Erastus: "Confirmatio Thesium," B. iii, (73) quoted Fremantle, 219.

tude which led Anabaptism to draw aside lest the hem of its garment be defiled by earthly pollution. Of course it is legitimate for a Christian to hold office; if the Christian man is not to take his lawful part in guaranteeing that the actions of the State are in accordance with the divine purpose, what but lip service is it to call the State a divine institution?

Calvin's struggle for the autonomy of the Genevan Church centered around the practise of discipline, and as such will be considered in a later connection (Chapter VI). From his first entry into the city in 1536 till his victory in 1555 the autonomy of the Church was his chief concern. Any compromise he found necessary was repugnant to him. He was convinced that councillor control in religious affairs was not consonant with the headship of Christ; hence all civil encroachments he steadfastly resisted. Of course the civil government must foster, defend, vindicate and guard the true Church, but this does not mean that the State is to have charge of Church discipline, to arrogate to itself the right of excommunication, to seize ecclesiastical property and administer it at will, to regulate ceremonies or creeds, to choose and dismiss ministers.... How can Christ be the Head of the Church under such humiliating conditions? It is natural that even Christian magistrates be primarily concerned about the civil and political interests of the State and hence allow their judgment in religious affairs to be coloured by worldly considerations, and when some magistrates are Christian in name only, as frequently happened in Geneva, how can it be thought compatible with the

honour of God, for such to have almost complete control over the Church? Even the external ordering of the Church is not for a moment to be left to the civil authorities if there is the slightest danger that the purity and independence of the Church be compromised.

Another aspect of the situation which should be carefully noted is that Calvin is very canny in his application of the principle of autonomy. He wages a ceaseless battle for the spiritual autonomy of the Church, if the Church be evangelical and Protestant. For the Anabaptists there is to be no autonomy, rather even civil persecution or exile; to Roman Catholicism no quarter is to be given. Catholic sympathisers in Geneva are compelled to recant or depart, and as far their Church is concerned, it is not for a moment to be tolerated. Once a city by majority vote has decided for the Reformation, all Church property and ecclesiastical rights are taken away from the Catholics and invested in the hands of either the new Protestant Church or the Council.

Calvin is very indignant that the Protestant minority of Poitiers in Schwyz are not allowed to worship as they will,* but it does not occur to him to extend this right to Catholics in Geneva. Yet in Catholic countries he insistently calls upon sympathetic princes or councils to lead in the Reformation and to grant autonomy to Protestant minorities. In a letter to the brethren of Orbe, where a public disputation is to be held and

* Letters, III, 148.

vote taken, he urges with all zeal that not a stone be left unturned to insure that the Protestants obtain the larger vote, and thus "procure an unknown blessing for those even who spurn it."* When it was discovered that the Protestants had won by 18 votes, automatically the Roman worship was abolished! Calvin views such practises, by no means uncommon, with entire equanimity. The minority are accorded no rights whatsoever, and at times it appears as if the purpose is not so much to persuade Catholics of their error and bring them to the truth, as to subject them to the evangelical faith by mere force of greater numbers. If the prince or the majority of citizens embrace the Reformation, all autonomy of the Catholic Church automatically ceases. To this Calvin readily assents, with the blunt retort that the Catholic Church does not possess the two marks which must always characterise a true Church of Christ, and hence is to be accorded no consideration. In the abstract Calvin and the Catholics would agree that the Church must be accorded its full spiritual autonomy; yet as a matter of fact the latter would strictly limit such autonomy to the Catholic Church, while Calvin would restrict it to the Protestant evangelical Church. A like amount of consistency and bullheadedness is found in either position, and a lamentable lack of religious toleration.

Yet for all that, Calvin made a great contribution. Taking the old Catholic conception of autonomy he stripped it of most of its abuses, and grafted it into the Protestant tree which was fast succumbing to a State tyranny as soul destroying as the Roman

* Letters, III, 24 ff.

domination had^{ever} been. Primarily to him the Protestant Church owes its legacy of spiritual autonomy. Anabaptism, it is true, worked toward the same goal, and even combined with this conception a surprising amount of religious toleration. Yet its grotesque excesses,* and its principle of separatism, then regarded as a cowardly withdrawal from all connection or sympathy with civil government, - such rendered the early Protestant world well-nigh impervious to the influence of Anabaptism. Though Calvin himself did not extend a like freedom to other than fellow Protestants, he firmly implanted the principle of spiritual autonomy in the Reformed Church itself. A later age in more peaceful times was able to develop this principle and apply it with equal consistency and Christian charity to others. On the whole the Reformed Church has been peculiarly faithful to its legacy from Calvin as regards the autonomy of the Church.

The most difficult aspect of the relation of Church and State in Calvin's thought is the question: are we at all justified in identifying Genevan practise with Calvin's ideal? We shall see that the eagerness of the Genevan patricians to retain their rights conceived to be endangered by the institution of Church discipline, the unrestrained enmity of the Libertines, and the jealousy of the magistracy lest its new won power be questioned, - we shall see that such forces militated against a full realisation of Calvin's ideal of complete spiritual autonomy for the Church.

We are compelled to conclude that his theory as expressed in the

* Schaff, "Creeds," I, 842, speaks of the Anabaptists as the "crude harbingers and martyrs of some truths which have germinated in other ages."

Institutes and other writings is by no means at one with the actual civil-ecclesiastical arrangement attained in Geneva. There are critics who deny this; others admit it, of whom some maintain that the Genevan arrangement more fully accords with Calvin's mature thought after his theories had been put to the exacting test of practise, others that it represents a necessary compromise.

A careful study will convince us that we must discard the judgment that there is no essential difference between theory and practise. Nor can we agree to the assumption that because Calvin battled so insistently for the autonomy of the Church he was trying as a matter of principle to wrest as much power from the State as possible. In all probability it is Lang's just impatience with the latter view which drives him to the former extreme of minimizing almost to the vanishing point any alleged difference between Calvin's theory and practise. However it is a mere question of fact, and it seems incontrovertible that there were essential differences between theory and practise, and that these differences are to be accounted for on the basis of compromises which the Reformer felt called upon to make. Of course many regard compromise as utterly alien to Calvin's temperament and character. But surely this is an a priori assumption. If True, compromise on any aspect of essential doctrine is inconceivable in him, but Calvin did not confound theological speculation with essential doctrine. He recognised that there are matters regarding which there may be honest difference of opinion, and though he undoubtedly severely

limited such a sphere, yet his recognition of it is significant. Differences with Luther, Bucer and Zwingli in regard to the Lord's Supper never stood in the way of a sincere desire on his part to see all Protestants united in one common communion.* Even Socinus had a hold upon his affections. Equally noteworthy also was the spirit of moderation which he exhibited regarding differences in ceremonies. These he might regret, but he was tactful and Christian enough to willingly tolerate them.** Though he insisted upon discipline as a mark of the true Church he gladly recognised the Lutheran and German Swiss bodies as parts of the Church, though in them the practise of discipline was largely held in abeyance. Inasmuch as it was in these latter spheres that the differences in Calvin's theory and practise chiefly lay, it need not seem unnatural for him to have compromised, especially if by so doing he retained what he conceived to be the essential autonomy of the Church.

It should also be remembered that though Calvin believed that his complete system of ecclesiastical polity was deducible from Scripture and hence binding upon the Church, nevertheless he not only tolerated other forms, but did not even disapprove of the appointment of bishops in Poland and England. Moreover, he always recognised as true Churches the State controlled German Swiss and the Lutheran consistorial governed bodies even though in polity such differed very considerably from the Genevan Church.

* Cp. Ch. VII, Section on Church Unity.

** As he exclaimed in one of his letters exhorting the parties of Geneva to peace and union, "Little will be said about ceremonies at the judgment seat of God." Quoted Henry, I, 126.

There were issues upon which Calvin refused to compromise, preferring exile itself. Notably was this the case in the recognition of discipline and the decision on doctrinal matters as prerogatives of the Church. Other matters, such as State ownership of ecclesiastical property, State interference in the election of elders, ministers, etc., he might struggle against and yet eventually tolerate. It is a false position to assume that to Calvin any compromise was impossible.

In a comparatively recent collection of some of his shorter sketches ("Reformation und Gegenwart") August Lang takes sharp issue with Sohm's conclusion that: "Manifestly the execution of Calvin's thought in Geneva itself was only imperfect. The ecclesiastical court (Consistory) possessed indeed the power of Church discipline over the laity, but not more. Church discipline of the clergy remained in the hands of the Council. Church legislation and even the final decision in the selection of ministers the Council likewise retained. The elders of the Consistory were civil appointees; they were officially called 'representatives of the Council.'"^{*} This alleged difference between theory and practise Lang characterises as a widely diffused error. He denies that the Ordinances of 1541 were only a compromise, and states it as his conviction that "all these supposed differences between Calvin's ideal and practise are either non-existent or greatly exaggerated."^{**} Lang refers specifically to the Ordinances

^{*} Sohm, "Kirchenrecht," I, 654 f., quoted Lang "R. und G." 180.

^{**} Ibid. Lang, 180, p. 181, he calls them "trifling."

of 1541 and in general to all of Calvin's activity in Geneva. As to the Ordinances, we know that Calvin considered them imperfect and incomplete. His letter to Oswald Myconius (14th March, 1542) makes it plain that he was not satisfied with them, and that even after the most vigorous efforts he had obtained only a partial adoption of his ideal, only "such as these disjointed times permit."* It is apparent that Calvin met with only tolerable success in this effort, due almost entirely to the jealous zeal of the Council lest its comprehensive powers be diminished one iota.**

One subsequent study of Church discipline will indicate that even the power of discipline over the laity was not firmly assured to the Consistory until after sixteen years of incessant labour, untold conflicts, and exile; even then the Consistory remained far more a committee of the Council than a Church body, as Calvin had desired. In this, the most far-reaching of his struggles, Calvin was by no means wholly successful, as he would have been the first to have acknowledged. (Cp. Ch. VI). There is a wide gulf between ideal and practise.

As regards the discipline of ministers, Lang avers that nowhere does Calvin express himself as to how this is to be undertaken, only that it is to be stricter than the common discipline

* Letters, I, 292.

** In general cp. A. M. Hunter, 191 ff; Walker, 266 ff; Werd. 311. "The Ordinances may therefore be considered Calvin's work, but they do not represent Calvin's ideal. They are Calvin's work in the form which it assumed in its passage through the Councils. They embody his ideal only so far as the civil courts of Geneva would allow him to give his ideal a practical form." Reyburn, 112 f.

over the laity.* Hence it is incorrect for Sohm to regard the mere fact that the discipline of ministers remained in the hands of the Council as any indication that this was not precisely what Calvin desired.

In the Ordinances of 1541 it was provided that the Venerable Company, the ministers as a body, should meet once a quarter for mutual criticism of each other's life and doctrine. Weekly meetings for mutual inspiration were also held. Certain offenses were detailed, the commission of which by a minister automatically subjected his conduct to the consideration of the group. If the latter were unable to arrive at a decision, the case was to be referred to the Consistory, and then in turn to the magistracy. In every case the final word rested with the Council. Thus the ministry possessed only initiatory supervision over the life, morals and even doctrine of its members. The final word lay in the hands of the State controlled Consistory or the magistracy itself. We find it quite impossible to believe that Calvin willingly placed in the hands of a civil body even the indirect control of either doctrine or life of the pastors. We know that many other alterations were made in the Ordinances by the magistrates in order to conserve their authority over the Church.** Probably this belongs in the same category.

Lang is quite right when he avers that in the Institutes Calvin does not specifically prescribe that the discipline of

* "Rund G"
Lang, 180.

** Cp. Werd, 308 ff. As to differences of opinion or contentions the ministers are to call in the elders, and if necessary take the

ministers is to be in the hands of the Church rather than of the Council. But surely it is the natural inference from the discussion that Calvin highly approved of a rigid discipline of the clergy being in the hands of Church Synods, as in ancient times, and that thus the clergy be stricter in censuring their own members than in disciplining the laity.* If Calvin fought as he did, facing personal danger and exile in order to insure to the Church alone the right of discipline over the laity, lest the civil government be less strict and unduly meddle in spiritual matters, thus destroying the headship of Christ, is it conceivable that of his own free will he granted the magistracy the final decision in the far more vital and stricter discipline of the clergy? To the extent that this was done in Geneva we cannot but regard it as a necessary compromise on his part, analogous to the compromise which he found unavoidable in the case of the struggle for the recognition of discipline over the laity as a prerogative of the Church.**

matter to the Council. Discipline of morals was exercised by the ministers and elders, but confirmed and carried into effect by the Council.

* Inst. IV, xii, 22.

** It might be retorted that if discipline of the clergy be so much more vital than discipline of the laity, why did Calvin relent regarding the former and not regarding the latter? In answer it should be remembered that the right of excommunication over the laity was not confirmed to the Consistory until 1555, and also that in Geneva the pressing problem was the discipline of the masses, not the discipline of the ministers. The latter were few in number, more subject to spiritual appeal and more easily held in control.

In regard to the election of ministers Lang points out that in the earlier editions of the Institutes (^{es}1539) Calvin left the matter to the option of the princes or magistrates to make arrangements according to the time and customs of the people, cautioning lest the mass of the people gain control. However, in later editions nothing at all is said as to any part the prince or magistrate is to take in the election of pastors. Rather "We see then, that ministers are legitimately called according to the word of God, when those who may have seemed fit are elected on the consent and approbation of the people. Other pastors, however, ought to preside over the election, lest any error should be committed by the general body either through levity, or bad passion, or tumult."*

This change in later editions of the Institutes is probably to be referred to the unpleasant experiences occasioned by councillor interference in the appointment and deposition of ministers. The Ordinances had provided that the confirmation of the magistrate is required, as well as the approval of the clergy and the ratification of the people. (It is to be remembered that Calvin himself was invited to Geneva by the Council.) The Council was by no means bound to accept the decision of the clergy. Calvin's experience must have led him to distrust this provision. The words of De Watteville, a Bernese commissioner sent to Neuchâtel to compose the differences in that city relative to the deposition of Farel, well illustrate the all too prevalent attitude of governments in the matter. Calvin, in a letter to Bucer, thus quotes

* Ibid. IV, iii, 15.

the commissioner: "'As if,' said he, 'any one could compel me to keep a servant in my house who did not please me,' and he made use of this comparison more than once. If my servant does not please me, am I not at liberty to pay him his wages and order him to go about his business? Why am I not at liberty to do so with a minister?"* - which sentiment Calvin rightly terms an "indignity."

In the case of the deposition of a minister in Strassburg, Calvin thus addresses the French refugee Church in that city: ".... it is a confusion which tends to the ruin of a Church when the civil magistrate puts forth the hand of absolute authority in the election and deposition of a minister."** However, in the same letter, with no great amount of consistency, he does admit that at times due to dissensions in the Church a magistrate may find it necessary to interfere. It must be acknowledged that the implication of Calvin's insistence on the duty of magistrates to defend the true religion gave them much justification in their attitude that they would not guarantee to foster and protect any organisation in whose affairs they were permitted to have no voice. A measure of councillor supervision Calvin did not wholly condemn, but it is clear from his general attitude that it would have been more in accord with his own desire had the ministers of Geneva been elected and deposed by the Church itself.

* Letters, I, 267.

** Letters, III, 486.

Lang agrees that according to Calvin discipline is to be administered by the Christian men of the community, but asserts: "Who appoints them, is all one to him, provided only they fulfill their tasks."* Though it is true that in the Institutes by implication only does he teach that elders should be appointed by the Church, in the Letters he plainly indicates that he wishes them so chosen. It was on this question in Geneva that he was forced to make one of the most serious compromises. Theoretically it may have been all one to him who appointed the elders if they performed their tasks, if only true discipline flourish. Experience convinced him, however, that a Consistory whose members were officially called "representatives of the Council" cared more for those who elected them than for the purely spiritual tasks of the Church.**

Hence one need evince no surprise at the view expressed in a letter to Renée, Duchess of Ferrara, in 1564, just four months before the Reformer's death. Surely by that time he must have arrived at a mature judgment based on nearly 30 years of experience. This Duchess, mother-in-law of the Duke of Guise, was a zealous Protestant. At her chateau of Montargis she provided a place of refuge for persecuted Huguenots. If Calvin had approved of the appointment of elders by civil power he surely would have thus instructed her, for on the whole she was quite amenable to his suggestions. Instead we find him saying: "Thus, Madame, to

* Lang, "R. und G." 181.

** Reyburn (117) says that their initial question at the first meeting was: what will our wages be? - a significant attitude this, to characterise a body of elders dealing with Church discipline!

have a Church truly reformed, it is more than requisite to have people charged with a superintendence to watch over the morals of each; and that no one may feel himself aggrieved in giving an account of his life to the elders, let the elders be selected by the Church, as nothing can be more reasonable than to preserve to it this liberty, and this privilege will tend also to produce greater discretion in the choice of fitting men."*

Lang himself brings into prominence one instance in which Calvin of necessity deviated from his ideal.** From the first Calvin repeatedly stated that he regarded it important that excommunication, as well as the last admonition preceding it, should take place openly in the Church, with the knowledge and approbation of the people, in order that the Consistory might not act capriciously.*** This was not done, in spite of Calvin's oft-expressed wishes, for excommunication was carried out in the exclusive circle of the elders. The last revision of the Ordinances in 1561 finally made the open publication of excommunication necessary, as also a public reentrance. This can only be taken as implying that until Calvin's spirit prevailed (after twenty odd years), the Council feared that public excommunication would derogate from its authority, and hence resisted the proposal.

* Letters, IV, 348.

** Lang, Ibid. 182.

*** Inst. IV, xii, 7.

Again, Calvin regarded the laying on of hands in ordination as the custom of the early Church and a practise to be continued. Yet the Ordinances of 1541, while recognising the primitive usage of this rite, stipulated that on account of the danger of superstition it should not be carried out. In all likelihood the reason for this neglect of an ancient custom was the magistracy's fear that its usage might induce an even greater esteem for the ministers, and because it wished to keep the Church more closely dependent upon itself.* In its mind the oath of allegiance to the State was a much more fitting form of ordination than the laying on of hands by the clergy.

Equally illuminating was Calvin's attitude toward ecclesiastical property. It will be remembered that in 1535 the Genevan magistracy had appropriated to itself all of the ecclesiastical property of the Catholic Church. Part of the proceeds, it is true, were applied to the equipment of hospitals and schools, to which Calvin would have given his hearty consent. But when Calvin came to the city the new Church was utterly without any resources of its own. A similar condition existed in all the Swiss Churches. Little wonder that Catholics pointed the finger of scorn at this expropriation of ecclesiastical funds. That Calvin did not view this tendency with equanimity is clearly revealed in two letters written to Viret. In 1542 the Seigneury of Bern had put up the Catholic churches, priories and cloisters for sale, and consequently realised a considerable sum. Apropos of the sale Calvin writes:

* Werd. 309 f.

"You may at once conjecture what I must think of all this. You perceive an alienation of the property has been made, that the Church is to be left unprovided, that the magistrate may grant just what he pleases, as if the property were his own, and if the incumbent does not discharge the duty entirely to his satisfaction, he can even curtail the provision which he allots to the ministers, and may even threaten to withhold it altogether."* Calvin counsels an agreement "among ourselves," asserting that without unity nothing can be accomplished. Such alienation of ecclesiastical property from its destined use causes just offense on the part of Catholics, and gives them a true basis for their assertion that Protestantism allows the plunder of Church property. The common people^{also}/murmur against it. It also affords the worst type of precedent to rulers who are already too eager to confiscate property; and finally the Church will be left destitute of support, subject for its very existence to the whim of the magistrate.

Moreover, which is most important, there is a vital principle at stake, namely, "that what has once been devoted to Christ and the Church, is not the property of the magistrate these ungodly paunches have taken possession of what had been solemnly set apart to the service of the Church alienation is liable to anathema and to the curse, because it profanes that which is sacred." Yet lest others suspect the preachers wish the property for themselves, Calvin recommends the rule which King Josiah prescribed: "that the magistrates have a power of inspection, and that the

* Letters, I, 331.

deacons be the administrators."*

Though such was Calvin's ideal, in Geneva he was far from realising it, and even as regards Bern he felt it necessary to caution Viret to be content to acknowledge "that the magistrate may have the full power of administration, provided he faithfully dispenses the annual income, and neither diminishes nor dilapidates the property."* Calvin insisted that such property must in no case become the possession of the civil authorities. Not only the title of ownership but preferably the administration also is to be in the hands of the Church. So deep was his conviction on this score that he even spoke of it in the pulpit and before the Council. He would not weakly connive at what he considered sacrilege.** However, it is true that Calvin himself received his stipend from the State. Such was inevitable in Geneva, but it is equally patent that Calvin would not have had it so. We know from his remarks in the Institutes that he rather regarded with favour the practise of the early Church in setting aside a portion of its own substance for the support of those who labour for the Church.***

Few things were more utterly intolerable to Calvin than ecclesiastical legislation by the civil government, whether such legislation concerned comparatively unimportant ceremonies or vital points of doctrine. For example in the 1538 struggle which

* Ibid. I, 336 f.

** V. Dyer, 136.

*** Inst. IV, iv, 4-7.

resulted in the exile of Calvin and Farel, it was not the legitimacy of the Bernese ceremonies which was at stake, but rather the autonomy of the Church to order its own affairs. Calvin was perfectly willing to submit the question to a synod of evangelical ministers, but he would not yield to the caprice of a neighbouring Church (Bern), much less to the dictates of the magistracy. When in 1538 without consultation with the ministers the Council agreed to conform to the Bernese Church ceremonies, Calvin rebelled. How could the Church brook such interference in its internal affairs? On their refusal to abide by the Council's decision, the ministers were interdicted from preaching, and eventually exiled. The matters under dispute were not of great importance, but the principles involved were fundamental: that ecclesiastical legislation is to be in the hands of the Church, not of a civil magistracy, and that the freedom of the ministry to preach without undue interference on the part of the State must be upheld. Rather exile than compromise on such issues!

Calvin's conviction receives classic expression in a letter to Viret counselling him to oppose the interference of the Bernese Senate in Church affairs: "What a fatal precedent they are about to set, if the brethren acknowledge the Senate as judge in the case of doctrine, so that, whatever the Senate sanctions must be accepted and embraced by us as if proceeding from an oracle. What kind of a precedent, and how great a prejudgement must this be for posterity! Assuredly, if we suffer the yoke in this manner to be imposed

upon us, we treacherously betray the sacred ministry by our dissimulation. Nor shall we be able to excuse this perfidy in the sight of God or before men." The better system is for the ministers to "avoid this reef" by making excuse to the magistrate and referring the matter to "the advice of their colleagues"* (that is, to a synod of evangelical ministers).

Yet even Calvin compromised. He wished doctrinal questions and problems of ecclesiastical polity to be settled by synods of the Church; yet during most of his stay in Geneva, not a single ecclesiastical judgment but had to be submitted to the decision of the magistracy. Calvin stretched every nerve to keep the Church free from State dictation, but he achieved very meagre results. Again and again his proposals met with a blank refusal. He wished the Lord's Supper to be administered monthly, yet the Council ruled that four times a year was often enough. He favoured the administration of the Lord's Supper to the sick,** but was again unsuccessful. We even find the Council instructing the ministers how often they should preach and what the order of church service should be. Calvin protested, to be sure, but such is not only indicative of the constant interference of the State, but helps us to see why the Reformer thought it advisable to compromise on any but the most essential matters.

Ecclesiastical legislation on the part of the civil government was kept to the minimum only by Calvin's unceasing vigilance.

* Letters, I, 322 f.

** Letters, III, 463, 162.

It is no cause for surprise that subsequently, once his influence was removed, the Council expanded this policy. It passed judgment upon the doctrinal soundness of ministerial candidates, regulated the themes and length of sermons, and exercised minute control over doctrine, Church order and polity. It was Calvin alone who had prevented the utter absorption of the Church by the State, and once his restraining hand was removed, this process continued almost unabated.

In sketching some of the differences between theory and practise it may seem that we have been looking at exceptions rather than the rule, but as a matter of fact these exceptions were neither insignificant nor trifling. It was only after a struggle of sixteen years that even full freedom in discipline over the laity was accorded to the Church. Not only were the Ordinances as a whole the result of compromise, but Calvin was unsuccessful in his attempts to bring about Church ownership of ecclesiastical property, Church control of ecclesiastical legislation, not to speak of the laying on of hands in ordination, election of elders by the Church, and other vital principles.

Rieker suggests that the reason why Calvin accorded to the State so much power in religious matters was because the State was after all directed by the Genevan ministry. The Republic had declared its intention to abide by the word of God. Hence any interference by the magistracy in religious affairs might be

tolerated if the State be governed by Scripture as interpreted by the preachers. In other words the interference was not that of a worldly magistracy, but of men who had bowed to the divine will as contained in the word.*

Such an explanation is only partially convincing. No doubt the consideration that the Republic had officially recorded its intention to govern its life in accordance with the word of God did make Calvin more tolerant of civil interference in ecclesiastical affairs than he might otherwise have been. But the fact remains that Calvin constantly and insistently struggled with the magistracy, and sought to reduce^{to} the minimum, if not to entirely remove any interference on their part. That he was only partially successful should be attributed to the powerful opposition of the magistracy and not to a species of mental juggling by which the Reformer cajoled himself with the consideration that after all the meddling of a worldly magistracy could be tolerated on the ground that such a magistracy was not in reality worldly, but spiritual, in that it had contracted to be governed by the divine will. It is true that Calvin above all things desired that the word of God rule in Geneva, regardless of through whom or how this ideal be realised, but it is equally apparent that it was his conviction that this ideal could not receive proper realisation so long as the magistracy insisted on interfering in Church affairs. He had good reason to fear a caesaropapacy. At any rate this discussion of the relation of Calvin's theory

* Rieker, 185 ff.

and practise indicates clearly that the mere fact that a certain condition existed in Geneva is not in itself proof that this was in accord with the Reformer's ideal. He is neither to be blamed for all the inconsistencies and crudities of the Genevan system, nor to be credited with all its virtues.

There was an all-embracing inclusiveness and daring boldness in the mediaeval idea of a divine State which unconsciously formed the background of Calvin's thinking. In the face of such an ideal the weak and timid separatism of the Anabaptist sects, and the practical bondage to the State of the German Swiss and Lutheran Churches impressed him as unworthy, colourless substitutes. He could not but regard such as a poor recompense for the rejection of the mediaeval ideal of a God-directed civilisation. He was not blind to the fact that the ideal had deteriorated into a sordid attempt to subject the world to the iron hand of the Catholic clergy. However, in his mind the abuses of a hierarchical institutionalism did not destroy the excellency of the ideal. He looked out upon a Protestant world, contentious, divided, quarrelsome. He felt that the hoary conception of a divine State must be revived, to give backbone, unity and stability to the new movement. Hence was born in the little Church-Republic of Geneva a new theocracy, which served to invigorate the Reformed churches, to nerve them in their precarious struggle for existence, and to establish them high above the rising tide of the Counter Reformation.

The mediaeval Church had nominally succeeded in its ideal. For centuries Christendom had been held together by its papal-civil rule. Yet it had failed, chiefly because of the fatal dualism between the temporal and spiritual, because both Church and State had been more concerned about earthly authority than the triumph of Christian life and principles, and because the center, controlling power of this divine State was not God, but a predominantly worldly-minded clerical hierarchy.* By dint of religious sanctions, constant scheming, and popular superstition the hierarchy had gained the upper hand over the State. What had begun as a theocracy ended in becoming a hierocracy, a papal governed civilisation, rather than the submission of both civil and ecclesiastical powers to the theocratic ideal of a common loyalty to God. Two monumental attempts had been made to establish what verged on a genuine theocracy, that of Arnold of Brescia in Rome (1142-1155) and the magnificent experiment of Savonarola in Florence (1494-1497). Arnold of Brescia, an enemy of both ecclesiastical and civil tyranny, led the people of Rome in a rebellion which succeeded in expelling the Pope from supreme power and putting the control of the government in the hands of the Roman people in the form of a Republic. The clergy and even the Pope were retained as ministers of the Gospel. Arnold attempted to develop in the people a sense of their sacred responsibility, but failed because many of his supporters in expelling the Pope desired license, not freedom, the rule of sense, not the rule of God. The rebellion

* Fremantle, 192 f.

was put down by the Emperor, the Pope reinstated, and another martyr added to the long list of those who have fallen in an endeavour to found religious and civil freedom. The attempt of Savonarola to found a theocratic city in Florence was shorter lived, but exerted a wider influence. About forty years before young Calvin entered the city of Geneva to begin his life work, this grim old Dominican monk of San Marco became the practical dictator of the Florentine republic. Savonarola was a faithful churchman, whose depth of religious sincerity and zeal were matched by as intense a patriotism and love of justice. From his pulpit in the Duomo he denounced the moral and political corruption of the city, and eventually took the lead in the establishment of a theocratic republic. "In him lived again the spirit of the Hebrew prophets, their moral power, their spiritual insight into futurity, their firm faith in a redemption for the people as a whole, their deep sense at the same time of the actual wickedness about them, and their awful denunciations of swiftly coming judgment Savonarola died a martyr to his attempt to make Florence a Christian city."*

A curious and profitable parallel might be drawn between the stern old monk of San Marco and the brilliant young scholar of Geneva, the one steeped in all the hoary dignity of age-old Catholicism, the other versed in Humanism and leader of the intellectual and religious forces liberated by Luther. Yet both men were possessors of a deep personal faith, a hatred of all evil, and the

* Ibid. 204, 208.

same grim loyalty to duty, abhorrence of hypocrisy, love of righteousness. Both were subject to the temptation to regard their programs as ipso facto the will of God, yet in neither was personal ambition a dominating factor. Confessionally the men were poles apart, but both were kindled by the same overmastering passion to make of their cities a new Jerusalem, but both exhibited a keen appreciation of the grandeur of the theocratic ideal. There echoed through the Duomo the same denunciation of moral looseness as in the Cathedral of Saint-Pierre in Geneva; the bonfire of vanities would have warmed the heart of Calvin. The insignia "I. H. S." which marked the buildings of Geneva is strangely reminiscent of the old inscription to be read by the banks of Arno, "Jesus Christ, King of Florence." So centuries before the people of God had gloried in the boast that Jehovah was God in Israel. The world-wide influence of Geneva and Florence is in no small degree traceable to the politico-religious activities of their two most famous sons.*

We cannot discover any direct influence of Savonarola upon Calvin, but a kinship of spirit is unmistakably evident. The example of such an effort could not have been entirely lost upon him in spite of its association with what he would regard as a corrupt doctrinal basis. The mediaeval ideal of a theocracy distinctly appealed to a temperament such as Calvin's. It led him to seek to found in Geneva on a Reformed doctrinal and ethical

* Would that George Eliot had turned her pen to Geneva also, for in this city of the Alps, and in the character of its most illustrious son, there is all the grandeur, pathos, sublimity and heroism to form a background for one of the greatest novels of all ages.

basis a divine Church-Republic directed by the word of God, which should prove an anchor to the wayward tendencies of early Protestantism.

In general, to the early Protestants the abuses of hierarchical tyranny were so inextricably bound up with the theocratic ideal, that they were driven to the extreme of permitting, if not asserting, the dominance of civil power. In addition Luther preferred to trust to less tangible and more spiritual forces. The growing power of nationalism likewise refused to be bound by what it regarded as ^{an} outworn theory compromising its independence. Hence State dominance gradually displaced the theocratic ideal.

Not so with Calvin. Not only was he attracted by theocracy as a legitimate State ideal which would serve to give stability to the new faith, but such a system was equally the expression of his religious convictions. Theocracy has its analogy in his insistence on a Christocracy within the Church. The headship of Christ formed the keystone of his ecclesiastical polity. It precluded all human domination within the Church, and demanded that Christ alone should rule through the word of God. Christocracy in the Church, theocracy as a common ideal for both Church and State, - these alike are rooted in the cardinal doctrine of Calvin's theology, the sovereignty of God. Not a sphere of life but must be captured for God; not a phase of human endeavour but must be measured and guided by the word of God!

It has long been the custom for critics with a particular animus against Calvin to exaggerate the extent of his power in Geneva, to portray him as an absolute dictator, as the Protestant Pope, and to regard his efforts as an attempt to reinstate all the tyranny of an outworn mediaeval theocratic ideal, merely replacing the hierarchy by the equally oppressive rule of a little coterie of Protestant ministers. On the other hand somewhat too zealous admirers of Calvin delight to ferret out incidents in which the Reformer is exhibited as a shy, backward individual, constantly out-voted and out-manouvered by the lynx-eyed civil magistrate. Either generalisation is better calculated to express its author's predilections than to enable us to get at the gist of the matter.

There is an element of truth in both characterisations. At times Calvin's authority in Geneva was overshadowing, but as we have seen, never to the extent that he was able to obtain full autonomy for the Church, let alone be dictator.* The jealous vigilance of the magistracy prevented the latter possibility, even had Calvin been so minded. The parity of the clergy so zealously upheld by Calvin was a like safeguard. He was by no means dictator of the Consistory, let alone of the Council.** There is not the slightest indication that Calvin desired to be a Protestant Pope, and there is every indication that had he so aspired,

* It should be remembered that even when his power was firmly established at the time of the trial of Servetus, he was unable to accomplish his purposes. "We endeavoured to alter the mode of his (Servetus) death, but in vain." Letters, II, 418.

** Henry (I, 347) relates that in one instance he could not even get a certain case to the attention of the Consistory, being out-voted by an overwhelming majority; on which occasion he remarked: "How could I deprive my brethren of their right and freedom?"

he would have been quite unsuccessful. By the sheer force of his religious, intellectual and moral superiority, he did attain a predominating influence in Genevan affairs; so much is quite beyond question. He was held in the highest esteem by the thinking men of the city, and was consulted on every subject from the drafting of a new legal code and State alliances to house-hunting. But this was in large measure simply a voluntary tribute to his ability; it did not issue in his assumption of civil power over Geneva.

Nor is there a shade of conscious personal ambition in Calvin's Genevan career. At times during his doctrinal controversies with the State, his testy temper got the better of him. Zealous, almost unrestrained activity to guard the honour of God, led him very near the danger line of identifying his own views with the will of God. Yet even when he was apparently most vindictive against those who differed from his doctrine, his replies invariably reveal it as his sincere conviction that he was striving for the honour of God, not for himself.

That Calvin revived the theocratic ideal is evident, but this is not per se evidence that he countenanced the former excesses of theocracy, namely, the rule of a hierarchy, and the subordination of State to Church. We shall see that in the main Calvin is quite free from these tendencies. Nevertheless, it has been repeated with such insistence as to procure for it a large measure of acceptance that in Geneva Calvin merely resuscitated the outworn, mediaeval theocratic ideal which subordinated the State to the Church.

There is, as we shall see, an element of truth in this, but the manner in which it is usually expressed gives an unfair and essentially incorrect impression of the Genevan Church-Republic.

It will serve to clarify matters if we refer to a few modern criticisms of the Genevan system. One writer avers: "In point of fact, Calvin's State is a theocracy after the type of Gregory the Great, with the 'divine ministry' in the place of the Pope."* Again, August Lang concludes: "In Geneva to be sure, on account of the smallness of the Republic, and because that generation in general recognised no other ideal for the State than the theocratic, the result of Calvin's struggles was the complete dominance of the State by the Church (die völlige Beherrschung des Staates durch die Kirche).""**

A more recent and unrestrained criticism is found in the interesting and invaluable volume on religious liberty by Ruffini. He recognises that Calvin regarded the Church as instituted not only to preach the word and administer the sacraments, but also to realise the Kingdom of God on earth. "Everything in the world and first of all the power of the State should converge and co-operate in this Christianising work. With this end in view the State should be closely united to the Church, though not in a condition of supremacy, or even of simple equality, but in a subordinate position." Like the Catholics, Calvinists argue that

* Hall of Union Seminary, New York, "Hibbert Journal," Oct. 1907.

** Lang, 190.

as Christ's kingdom is preeminent, so the Church stands above the State. "Calvinism, far from showing the obedience and patience of the Lutherans towards the State (How true!), became uncompromising and intractable as soon as the State deviated in the slightest degree from the task assigned to it of all the evangelical denominations Calvinism is the least favourable to the public authority, because it cannot conceive any other relations with the latter except the following: either the complete subjection of the civil authority to the precepts of the Church, and therefore a theocracy; or else, the absolute incompetence of the civil authority in ecclesiastical affairs, and therefore separatism An attempt has been made to show that in the régime inaugurated by Calvin in Geneva it was the State which dominated the Church, but it was victoriously demonstrated that his system was the most genuine theocracy that could possibly be imagined a second Rome within the Protestant camp."*

It appears that such are not original criticisms. Beza, in writing his life of Calvin soon after the great Reformer's death, apparently found it difficult to restrain his indignation, because "some are not ashamed to say and to write that he reigned in Geneva, both in Church and State so as to supplant the ordinary tribunals For what would these people be ashamed to say? No refutation is required by those who knew this great man when he was alive, nor by posterity, who will judge him by his works." Tracts, Vol. I, c.

* Ruffini, "Religious Liberty," 261, 160, 301.

Ruffini has been a bit hasty in his conclusion that Church dominance over the State in Calvin's régime has been "victoriously demonstrated." It is scarcely such a closed issue as this term would indicate. Nor is he justified in asserting that any system of theocracy inevitably involves ecclesiastical domination of civil affairs. Ruffini of course approaches the subject from the point of view of religious liberty. He rightly finds much to resent in Calvin's lack of tolerance. But there is real danger in looking at Church History from the point of view of any single principle, however noble such be in itself. Calvinism was intolerant, not any more so than Lutheranism, to be sure, and not nearly so much so as Catholicism, but it is true that early Calvinism did not grant religious liberty. However, impatience with the system on that score does not give one an adequate excuse to condemn Calvinism and "all its works."

Ruffini's assertion that for Calvinism the State must be in a "subordinate position," under "complete subjection" to the Church simply does not square with the facts, either as contained in Calvin's theory of the State or in Genevan practise. Enough has been referred to under the discussion of the relation of Calvin's theory and practise in Geneva to clearly indicate that he was only partially able to attain even his ideal of the spiritual autonomy of the Church. All that he managed to conserve was the exercise of discipline, and even the right of excommunication was accorded to the Church only after a ceaseless struggle of nearly two decades. In Geneva the relations between Church and State were so hopelessly

interlocked that a categorical statement regarding either subordination or dominance is quite out of the question. For every instance which seems to give colour to an alleged tyranny of Church over State, it is possible to find another which indicates that instead of a Genevan "theocracy" there flourished a caesaropapacy as rigid as that of Bern. How convenient it would be if we could only juggle historical facts enough to enable us to neatly label and pigeonhole them! But actually we find Calvin's authority subject to periodical changes, never elevating him to the role of absolute dictator, but at times undoubtedly granting him a determining influence in certain aspects of Genevan affairs.

Moreover, it ill accords with the fitness of things for critics to forget that Geneva under Calvin was the one bulwark which topped the engulfing tide of caesaropapacy and conserved for the main body of Protestantism the spiritual autonomy of the Church. This did not involve freedom for others. Yet even Ruffini admits that Calvinism held in germ, though it did not apply them, the true principles of religious tolerance. Had it not stood for the ^{spiritual} autonomy of the Church, had it not developed a rule of the word of God in Geneva, had it not thus nerved the new faith, Western Protestantism might easily have collapsed. Religious liberty in the hands of the despised Anabaptists and feeble Socinians might conceivably have made its way; but as a matter of history it was the union with a later Calvinism with its strong ecclesiastical sense which won the day for both spiritual and civil liberty in Holland, Britain and America.

Yet Calvin did seek to establish a species of theocracy, but it was no such theocracy as Rome had ever known. He did not recognise the supremacy of the hierarchy over the secular government. He successfully guarded against this by his system of presbyterian ecclesiastical polity. He did not strive to found what is strictly called a "Church-directed civilisation"*; but his ideal was that both Church and State recognise the sovereignty of God, and take as their supreme rule of faith and life, not the word of the hierarchy, nor of a consistory, but the word of God, in short a Bibliocracy. Both civil and ecclesiastical power should bow to the word of God, and to that alone. Such was Calvin's ideal.

This system of theocracy had also to a lesser extent engaged the support of Luther, but as Troeltsch observes, in a more idealistic and passive sense. Calvin in Geneva brought the ideal to an infinitely greater degree of practical realisation. As in Catholicism there was still to be a supernaturally directed civilisation, but (Troeltsch notwithstanding) it was to be not a Church-directed but a Bibliocentric civilisation.

If Troeltsch were to substitute the phrase Christian civilisation for the "ecclesiastical civilisation" it would more nearly represent Calvin's ideal. It is a far cry from this Bibliocracy to the theocracy of a Pope Gregory, so far indeed as to remove all sting from the taunt that in this Calvin is mediaeval. Their similarity consists rather in that they have a common foundation in Christian doctrine and in the conviction that religion is not

* Vs. Troeltsch, "P. and P." 69.

merely a personal matter but must find outlet in broader spheres of life.

Calvin insisted that we are not left to a mere choice between the authority of an ecclesiastical hierarchy and the license of sensual Libertinism; a *via media* he finds in liberty within the bounds of the word of God. Church and State are independent partners united in the common enterprise of fashioning the world according to the will of God expressed in Scripture. Church and State alike are to bow unhesitatingly to its decree, to grant it unequivocal obedience.*

The decrees of God contained in His word are "the weapons of our warfare! Here is the supreme power with which pastors of the Church should be invested, namely, to dare all boldly for the word of God, compelling all the virtue, glory, wisdom, and rank of the world to yield and obey its majesty; to command all from the highest to the lowest, trusting to its power to build up the house of Christ and overthrow the house of Satan; to feed the sheep and chase away the wolves; to instruct and exhort the docile, to accuse, rebuke, and subdue the rebellious and petulant, to bind and loose; in fine, if need be, to fire and fulminate, but all in the word of God."** This is the theory which lies at the basis of Calvin's practise in Geneva. Combining this state-

* It will be remembered that the citizens of Geneva even before Calvin's arrival met together in their General Assembly had agreed to live "in this holy evangelical law and word of God." It is extremely doubtful if this would have been aught but lip service, but for the ceaseless labour of Calvin.

** Inst. IV, viii, 9.

ment with the pivotal doctrine of the sovereignty of God we have the basis of a new order which is neither mediaeval theocracy nor State autocracy, but a Bibliocracy*, the charter of Puritanism. The sovereign God will rule over all! The will of the Great Lawgiver as expressed in Scripture is to be the infallible rule of faith and life for king and peasant, minister and shopkeeper, Council and Consistory, Church and State! Not Calvin, nor the Church, nor the magistracy, but the word of God shall rule Geneva!

But there is danger as well as strength in this new order of theocracy. Biblicism may degenerate into a barren legalism with God as Lawgiver, the Church as the custodian and vindicator of the Law, the pastors or Consistory as plaintiffs and judges, all men, from prince to peasant, as defendants, - such a dire possibility received only meagre realisation in Geneva, for Calvin's interests in spite of his juridical training were almost entirely religious, not legalistic. But there is specifically one particular in which there is a possibility of the renewal on a Protestant basis of the tyranny implicit in mediaeval theocracy.

The crux of the problem is this: granted that the word of God is the sole norm; who is to be its interpreter, the individual Christian, the magistrate, the Consistory, the minister? If the civil authorities are dependent upon the ministry for instruction in the word, there is danger of a recrudescence of ecclesiastical domination. As a matter of fact Calvin was not at all diffident about calling the State to task for alleged deviations from the

* This is recognised by Troeltsch and Rieker, following Choisy's "La Théocratie à Genève."

word of God, but in a considerable proportion of cases his advice was not in the least heeded. In the Consistory to be sure the Church of Geneva did possess a lever by which it could exert some influence over the State. Yet because of its composite civil-ecclesiastical character it proved rather a broken reed upon which to lean. Nor should it be forgotten that Calvin did not regard the Scriptures as a code book containing detailed instructions for legal enactments, only insisting that civil legislation be in general accord with the moral law and in other respects conform itself to the law of nations.

In the final analysis, however, by his doctrine of the testimony of the Spirit Calvin placed the interpretation of the word in the hands of the individual. True, the individual would be assisted by the doctrinal pronouncements of Reformed Synods, but even so the Christian is not shorn of the right to interpret Scripture as led by the Spirit of God. Moreover, Calvin insisted on the perspicuity of the word, and affirmed that its message will impress itself substantially the same on all open-minded readers, be they pastors or magistrates. Refusal to conform to the pattern of the word he would thus attribute to obstinacy, not to inability to know the will of the Lord.

The normal methods by which the Genevan Church influenced the State were those which are still in use, such as proclaiming the word of God, formulating an intelligent public opinion, and focussing it upon the religious and moral problems of the Common-

wealth. As such, Church recommendations were not mandatory, but rather of advisory and educative force. Even to reenforce this influence with the deference Calvin's own religious and intellectual attainments naturally elicited for his views, still we certainly do not possess sufficient evidence to make the categorical statement that in Geneva the State was subject to the Church. In all candor, however, it should be admitted that the extent to which the State meekly carried out the behests of the Church in the punishment of heretics there is involved an abridgment of civil authority. This element of compulsion in doctrine was all too prominent in Genevan life, and one cannot but deeply regret that Calvin was not enough ahead of his age to spurn stooping to such a practise. The extent to which the Consistory handed over heretics to the Council for civil punishment; the extent to which the pastors (contrary to Calvin's doctrine of the testimony of the Spirit and perspicuity of the word) insisted on their interpretation of the word as binding upon the State, and the extent to which a too legalistic idea of Scripture prevailed, to such an extent Calvin's Bibliocracy reflected a reactionary spirit.

One sees in Calvin the spirit of the Old Testament prophets with their zeal for the true worship of God, their horror of blasphemy, their hatred of idolatry as stupid and sinful, their depreciation of an elaborate ritual and ceremony, their concern for the practical needs of the people, especially for the widow, the orphan, the homeless, the sick, the poor, their harshness and severity against all sham and hypocrisy, their detestation of moral

evil, their conviction that the purpose of God finds unique expression in the political life of the Jewish people, their ideal of a theocracy in which God governs every sphere of the nation's life, their zeal for God and the coming of his Kingdom. Calvin combines the stern Puritanism of the lonely shepherd of Tekoa, the politico-religious insight and zeal for God's Kingdom and glory of Isaiah, the individualism of Jeremiah, and the hatred of social and moral evil so characteristic of Micah and Amos. The New Testament insistence on the inwardness of the Christian faith, on the depth of the love of God as revealed in Christ's life and death, on Christian liberty, and grace instead of law, - such are by no means absent in Calvin's message nor in his ideal of Bibliocracy, but they do not occupy as central a place as we might wish. Yet as a rule Calvin's practical, spiritual insight triumphed over a too literal and legalistic use of the word of God.

Bucer's emphasis upon the headship of Christ, the example of mediaeval theocracy, and Calvin's own juridical training strongly influenced the Reformer. Yet Calvin's ideal of theocracy was no mere combination of historical influences and contemporary tendencies, for the same forces produced no like effect on any man of his generation. It is the Reformer alone who took the idea of a mediaeval theocracy, sheared it of its most objectionable features, established as its new basis the will of God as contained in Scripture, and stamped it with the inimitable impress of his own utter abandon to the service of God.

Such a Bibliocracy elicited a large measure of support, and under Calvin became an indigenous movement. In Geneva during Calvin's ministry there existed one of the great movements of all history, in that a city officially and voluntarily sought to subject every sphere of its life to the rulership of God's word and therein reached a state of religious and ethical development, which, though far from perfect, better merits our wonder and admiration than our unsympathetic, ironic criticism. Geneva affords a unique representation of a theocracy in which magistrate and minister, Reformer and citizen, voluntarily submitted themselves to the word of God.*

It should not be inferred from Calvin's insistence on the autonomy of the Church that he favoured separatism. To-day, in the mind of an increasingly large proportion of Christendom, separatism and ecclesiastical autonomy are concurrent terms. Not so with Calvin. Separatism as represented by the sects was a principle of ecclesiastical polity not in the remotest degree an element of Calvin's thought. Such a theory revolted entirely against his conception of the divine nature of the State, especially its task as the defender, protector and vindicator of the Church; it was repugnant to his conception of the Church, for it savoured of the Anabaptist ideal which found the essence of the Church in voluntarily organised, individually independent groups of Christians, a view which did violence to his thought of the Church as an organism existing down through the centuries; it was associated in his mind with the sectarian view of the State as an institution with which the Christian should have no connection, regarding it

* In accord with the spirit of the age the minority who refused voluntarily to conform to this standard were coerced.

merely as a necessary evil in this sinful world; it delimited certain spheres of life within which the Kingdom of God could not be expected to find expression, putting such without the pale. In fact, as Troeltsch observes, it is their atomic separatism and enmity toward the State which Calvin chiefly condemns in his tract on the Anabaptists.*

In France, however, where the Protestants were a persecuted, despised minority, Calvin would tolerate separatism for no other relationship was possible, but he never regarded it as a principle for universal application. It is true that his ecclesiastical polity received fuller and more exact expression in separatist French Huguenot churches than in his own ostensibly theocratic Geneva. Yet there is no evidence to indicate that Calvin inferred from this that separatism was the better system. In fact, as Rieker reminds us, Lutheranism likewise would have been a separatist Church in France.** Anabaptism and French Calvinism were perforce separatist in ecclesiastical polity, because they were persecuted minorities to whom no other course was open. However, the latter never shared the prejudices of the former in regard to civil government. The sects were separatist both because of conviction and the force of circumstances, the Huguenots chiefly separatist by accident. They would eagerly have welcomed the chance to mould France into a Bibliocracy after the fashion of Geneva. They were kept from doing so only because of the smallness of their numbers and the enmity of the State.

* Tr. "Soziallehren", 627, Note.

** Rieker, 193.

Rieker rightly indicates that the rulership of Christ (through the word of God) is the constitutive idea of Calvin's theory of Church and State.* This results in Calvin's conception of theocracy as the "normal" relationship between Church and State. When the magistrate refuses to make such a Christocracy his chief end, when he will not be bound by the word of God or when he persecutes the true Church, then the secondary or "subsidiary" ideal, separatism, comes into play. That is to say, for Calvin the headship of Christ in His Church is the essential principle. Theories of Church and State revolve around this pivot. If possible he prefers this headship of Christ to be realised in a theocracy, in which both Church and State bow to the rule of the word of God. If the State refuses, however, he will turn to separatism which will at least insure that Christ's headship in His Church remains unimpaired. Lutheranism would not become separatist as long as it is permitted to preach the word and administer the sacraments unhampered by civil interference. Calvinism on the other hand must have ^{an} absolutely unhindered rulership of Christ in the Church. Any encroachment on the autonomy of the Church is a reflection on the headship of Christ and hence cannot be tolerated. Calvinism is thus more sensitive to ^{the} intrusion of civil authorities into Church affairs. Hence its tendency toward separatism is more marked than in the case of Lutheranism.

In the main Rieker has made a valuable contribution in indicating the headship of Christ as the constitutive element of Calvin's doctrine of the Church, and as the determining factor in his

* Rieker, esp. 188-194.

theory of the relation of Church and State. Hence the emergence of the Reformed conception of theocracy and separatism. But surely the sharpness of the alternative has been overemphasised. This is particularly true in the case of Ruffini who maintains that as soon as the State deviates "in the slightest degree" from its assigned task the Calvinistic Church has recourse to separatism.* But in the mind of Calvin it was not merely a question of either a complete theocracy or an absolute separation of Church and State. No one, least of all Calvin, could maintain that the Church in Geneva possessed its full autonomy. There were even infractions of Christ's headship in the Church. Calvin unceasingly strove to remove these, but he did not turn to a policy of separatism for relief. The Genevan Church-Republic was in some respects a Bibliocracy, in others a caesaropapacy. The fact that officially the State was committed to a theocratic policy kept him from despair in his attempt to make it worthy of the name. When circumstances indicated that it was wholly out of the question to establish a theocracy Calvinism did turn to separatism as its secondary ideal, but inability to realise in full its primary ideal of Bibliocracy did not necessarily involve an abandonment of the ideal, as long as there was any chance of its fulfillment. Especially was this the case if the commonwealth in question had officially sanctioned the institution of a theocracy.

* Ruffini, 261 f.

A final important fact should be borne in mind, namely, the elasticity of Calvinism. No greater tribute could be paid to any system than that it is able, without sacrificing any fundamental principle, to adapt itself to varying conditions. Adaptability is one of the earmarks of greatness.* Even in Calvin's own time his ecclesiastical polity found expression in theocratic Geneva and in separatist France. This ability to swing from theocracy to separatism (or vice versa, as was done by the Puritans on their arrival in America) without sacrificing the central message of Calvinism is proof of its greatness. Even a separatist Church inspired by the pivotal message of the sovereignty of God not only will guard the headship of Christ in the Church, but will influence the State as well. The theocratic motif yet lives in separatist Calvinism, in that it still seeks to persuade men to voluntarily subject every sphere of life to the control of Christ. That this ideal did not pass away with the advent of separatism is abundantly evidenced by the subsequent history of churches holding the Reformed system, especially those in Great Britain, the Dominions and America. Convictions on moral questions in particular are being translated into effective legislation, a tendency in which the churches most influenced by the Calvinistic piety have taken a leading part.

* There is genuine truth in Fremantle's assertion that "the test of a religion lies not so much in its immediate results as in its capacity for such changes as may adapt it to the needs of successive ages." (226)

CHAPTER V

THE CHURCH AND THE POLITICAL SPHERE (Cont.)

Submission and Resistance; Peace and Internationalism;

Calvinism and Democracy.

Luther once remarked: "A theologian must teach simply belief in the Lord Christ, and not meddle with secular affairs."* It is true that similar words might have been spoken by Calvin, who did not any more than Luther view with favour the political activities of Zwingli. Yet as an attitude of mind the above sentence is far more characteristic of Luther and of Lutheranism than of Calvin, still less of Calvinism; and after all attitudes and tendencies are of more weight than formal statements.

Calvin never confused the work of a minister with that of a politician as Zwingli tended to do. He insisted that the offices of pastor and prince are distinct and are not to be united in the same individual.** Much less did he approve of ministers of the Gospel engaging in armed resistance against the constituted authorities.*** He never had been in favour of the cause of evangelical religion in France being merged into and supported by a political

* "Antwort von der Gegenwehr," Erl. Ed., 64, p. 265, quoted Lang, "C. und R." 65.

** Inst. IV, xi, 8.

*** On the occasion of the capture of Lyons by French Protestants

conspiracy, and he was utterly opposed to the prostitution of the true Church to the level of a mere political party. The Church is to be the spiritual anchor of the State, not a transitory political organ, to be distinct from, though not indifferent to political interests.

Yet the minister does not cease to be a citizen on the assumption of his spiritual duties. When it was proposed in the Council of 200 that ministers should be expressly excluded from the General Assembly of citizens (as had been done in the case of priests during the former régime) Calvin answered with much spirit that the preachers felt themselves bound by duty as citizens to fulfill their civil obligations, and that they were not to be denied such a right as was done in the case of priests who refused to recognise the civil power.*

Calvin answered in the affirmative the question as to whether the Church, without being identified with any political party and without expecting or permitting its ministers to lead in political movements, yet has a message for the political sphere. The simple fact that in the Institutes, a distinctly religious book, he none the less has a section regarding civil government is indicative

under the leadership of a minister, Jacques Ruffi, Calvin thus addresses the Church of that city: "But there are things quite insupportable concerning which we are forced to write to you with greater asperity than we could have wished ... It is an unbecoming act in a minister to play the trooper, or captain, but it is much worse when one quits the pulpit to carry arms. But the worst of all is to go to the governor of a town, pistol in hand, and glorying in force or violence to threaten him." Letters, IV, 270.

* Henry II, 159. They were, however, excluded.

of the interest he placed in this sphere from a religious point of view. It is a matter worthy of note that this section appears almost in toto in the first edition before Calvin ever set foot in Geneva, showing that such political interests were native to him rather than acquired because of his Genevan experiences.

The circumstances confronting the Reformed Church in Geneva itself rendered such an interest of capital importance. Geneva was almost surrounded by the territory of hostile France, while near at hand lay the domains of the Catholic Emperor. Moreover, the whole course of the early Reformation in Geneva, as has been noted above, was marked by a careful balancing of political interests, as to whether the support of Fribourg and Catholicism should be preferred to the soldiers of Bern and the new faith. Protestantism in England, so much indebted in its early stages to the inspiration of Calvin, waxed strong in the reign of Edward, dispersed in that of Mary, regathered strength under Elizabeth. In the Lowlands political and religious freedom joined hands in a war for independence, while in France the frown or smile of the authorities marked the ebb and flow of Huguenot fortunes.

It was not an academic question of "meddling in politics" on a dilettante basis. The Church with no message for or interest in the political sphere could not have survived unless it yielded to State control or drifted away into a Anabaptist separatism. It never could have commended itself to the hard-pressed Genevan patriots, to the persecuted Huguenots, the oppressed burghers of

the Lowlands, the freedom loving Covenanters, and the aggressive Puritans of both the Old and New Worlds. A Church without such an interest would have become a mere football of politics, if it had in fact not already been utterly engulfed by the Counter Reformation.

It will be well to examine more in detail the sanctions by which Calvin sought to bulwark his ideal of Bibliocracy. What means may the Church legitimately avail itself of in influencing the political sphere, that here too God's expressed will may find fulfillment? If this sphere which so powerfully makes or unmakes the life of society, even in its religious interests, if this sphere is to be captured for God, is this to be done as individuals are won for Christ, and hence as magistrates or princes voluntarily subject themselves to the sway of God's word, or, as in the case of a Republic, the Christian conscience finds expression in the ballots cast by individuals? All must regard this as the normal method by which the Church influences the life of the nation. But is this enough? Has the Church no duty to inform the Christian conscience of the State; are there not methods by which it may, ^{may} ~~need~~ by which it must, use its influence as a corporate body for the accomplishment of God's will? With queries such as these let us turn to Calvin, and seek to uncover the means by which he as a minister of the Gospel, essayed to use his influence and that of the Genevan Church in attaining his ideal for the political sphere, a Bibliocracy.

The most evident and certainly the most potent means by which the Church of Geneva sought to influence the political sphere was the public preaching of the word of God. Since both State and Church possess the word as the ultimate standard of action, the means by which its message is appropriated by the State becomes of utmost importance. As has been noted in the discussion on theocracy in the preceding chapter, the extent to which the Church is regarded as the sole custodian and interpreter of the word is the extent to which we may legitimately postulate a subservience of State to Church. According to the Catholic conception of theocracy the Church is regarded as the infallible and sole distributor of supernatural grace and knowledge, thus involving the subordination of State to Church. However it is a mistake not consonant with an intimate knowledge of Calvin to assert that this was to the same extent true of him simply because he sought to establish a species of theocracy. For one thing, in common with all of Protestantism, Calvinism insisted on the publication in the vernacular of the word, and in every way sought to facilitate its use by both magistrates and people. The Reformer himself wrote commentaries on practically all of the books of the Bible, a life task in itself, in order to bring home the message of the word to student, to prince, to theologian, to the people. It was commonly said of the Protestants that the lowest man could put to shame the doctors of the Sorbonne. No longer did the Church arrogate to itself alone the promulgation of God's word. Every man was urged to read it for himself. Thus the Church voluntarily abdicated its position

as sole, infallible interpreter and guarantor of God's will.

Other restraints have been referred to above, such as Calvin's insistence on the perspicuity and harmony of Scripture, and conviction of its truth and message as dependent upon the Spirit of God speaking in and through the word to the Christian. This is not to dispense with the necessity for the Church as the principal custodian of the word, and its duty to constantly remind people of its commands, warnings and promises. However, such restraints do severely minimize the danger of ecclesiastical domination.

Moreover, in Calvinism if the magistrate or prince does not see fit to obey the word, so long as he does not command his Christian subjects to do aught which compromises their allegiance to God, they must passively submit. In such a case the Church must do all in its power to remind the magistrate of the claims of Scripture, but it possesses no jurisdiction over him beyond the ordinary ecclesiastical discipline of the Church. Civil coercion or rebellion are both alike to be spurned, and the Church simply appeals to the Christian conscience of the magistrate.* If he be devoid of this, it seeks by warning, entreaty, denunciation and prayer to bring him into such a relation to God as will give him a Christian conscience. In a republic it might also appeal to the conscience of Christian voters.

* Except indirectly in the case of the repression of heresy when it may turn over to the State for civil punishment those convicted of this "crime."

In other words persuasion was the normal and chief means by which the Church sought to further its ideal of Bibliocracy. The extent to which knowledge of the word was still dependent on the Church and the consequent actions of "godly" magistrates in accord therewith, the Church exercised a certain authority over the State. Yet this was directly proportionate to the wisdom, sincerity, moderation and tact of the ministry, and even more to the willingness of the magistrate to follow the commands of the word as expounded by the Church, which rendered ecclesiastical domination of doubtful potency. In fact only Calvin's restraining hand prevented the magistrate from assuming a dictatorship over the Church.

All life is to be guided by one norm, the word of God. Scripture is the storehouse of God's will, preaching the proclamation of this will. Without holding any political office, simply as a minister of the word, Calvin wielded power in the political sphere as great as many of the world's leaders. The secret of this is that through the public proclamation of the word in sermon, lecture, commentary, tract, and letter, he had but one great passion, to make known the will of God, as found in Scripture, for all of life.

There is no doubt but that by denunciation and censure on the part of both clergy and Consistory, Calvin himself succeeded in powerfully influencing the magistracy of Geneva. On the approach of the annual elections he always exhorted the people to choose godly magistrates, and not uncommonly preached a series of sermons

dealing with the social and political evils of the city.*

During the strenuous experiences which marked Calvin's first period in Geneva, there occurred an incident which well characterises the Reformer. A certain Michael Sept, who was unjustly accused of intrigue with the King of France against Geneva, was suspended by the magistracy from his office as captain. The Genevan preachers (Farel, Calvin and Coraault) raised their voices in his defense. Coraault's criticisms of the Council were so unrestrained and injudicious as to move that body to order him to be still. The Council of 200 evidently felt that the preachers were meddling in civil affairs, and so proceeded to decree that in future ministers should keep to their texts and leave politics alone. Little wonder that Calvin was indignant. He who so strenuously insisted on the sole headship of Christ in the Church could not tamely submit to dictation from the civil magistrate as to the exact limits within which he might apply the Gospel. It was as if the Hebrew prophets stood and heard the rulers say, prophesy unto us smooth things. Calvin no less than they felt he could not be true to God unless he like them applied God's truth to the whole gamut of human life, public and private. To obey such a command, to bow meekly to the dictates of a worldly-minded magistracy, were to muzzle the pulpit, to compromise the autonomy of the Church, and to deny his Christ.**

* In a letter to Viret a chance remark is interesting in this connection: "I perceive, however, how evil-disposed they (the Senate) are, and already I have broken ground upon the subject of the internal state of the city, in ten sermons." Letters I, 426.

** v., Reyburn 75; cp. also 163. Walker, 207.

In the preaching of the word of course Calvin's chief interest was to convict men of sin and to help them to find their Saviour. However, let those who honour him by following in his steps in the publication of a saving Gospel for individuals, take heed lest they forget that Calvin's interests encompassed all of life. Regenerated personalities will ever be the most powerful leaven in establishing the Kingdom of Christ upon earth. Yet Calvin recognised that this alone is not enough, that political earthquakes shake religious foundations, and that unless the spirit of God's word permeates civil life, both individual Christians and the Church itself are all too easily crushed by Caesar.

Another method by which the Church may legitimately influence the State is the exercise of Church discipline (Cp. Chapter VI). Calvin regarded discipline not only as the purifier of the Church, but as a deterrent to crime as well, and hence as of inestimable service to the civil authorities, as undoubtedly it was in Geneva. The magistrates were shrewd enough to see this, and hence tolerated the practise, while carefully guarding against its exploitation by the Church to the detriment of civil authority.

The Church possessed spiritual sanctions of more far-reaching power in dealing with offenders than any penalties, short of death, which could be imposed by the State. Even a worldly Berthelier wished above all other considerations to be readmitted to the Lord's Supper, participation in which was to the Genevan the seal

of respectability as well as an expression of faith. No other penalty was of such degrading force as exclusion from Christian fellowship. The significance of such exclusion lay not simply in the fact that excommunication normally involved civil penalties as well. To the Christian the effect of public condemnation by the corporate Christian conscience was simply overwhelming, being of a much more intimate and personal nature than the mere imposition of a civil penalty. No one wishes to have his sins publicly paraded before his neighbours and friends. Pitiless publicity is a powerful deterrent. Though Calvin of course condemned the belief that excommunication necessarily implies reprobation, the impressive seriousness of his treatment of the subject and the lingering remnants of Catholic superstition invested the act with overpowering significance.

Moreover, the activities of the Consistory necessarily assumed a more inward nature than external legal enactments. Crimes and offenses were discovered in their incipency. The law takes no cognizance of offenses until the misdeed has been committed, whereas the frequent house to house visitation of the elders, deacons and ministers took on a preventative as well as a punitive aspect. Not only crimes were thus uncovered, and offenders brought to task, but criminal tendencies were discovered, and it was then possible to take proper measures to arrest their development. In fact what Calvin wished to be purely a spiritual force came in Geneva to be a house to house police regulation system uncovering not only moral and religious offenders but also

traitorous political plots. Hence the magistrate could well afford to give to the Consistory which it itself appointed full authority in the matter of discipline. In passing, one vital link in the scheme of Bibliocracy should be mentioned, namely, that the magistrate as a Christian is like all other believers to make himself subject to Church discipline. This is a lever which gives to the Church a powerful means of enforcing upon his mind and conscience the claims of the word of God. Without here attempting any general appraisal of discipline, suffice it to say that it did possess marvelous power in the creation and maintenance of a Christian citizenry. There is no more helpful assistance which the Church can give to the State than by the performance of its essential task of developing Christian character.

We are enjoined by the word of God to pray for all those who are in places of authority. Prayer has from time immemorial been the refuge of the Church in its effort to establish the reign of God upon earth. What more powerful means to insure that princes and magistrates conform their conduct to the precepts of the Bible? Calvin's public utterances and letters abound in expressions of prayer for those in authority. Two examples will suffice. The first is one of the forms of prayer for church service adopted at Geneva under Calvin's auspices: "We therefore pour out our prayers before Thee, O heavenly Father, in behalf of all rulers and magistrates whose service Thou employest in governing us; and especially for the magistrates of this city, that Thou wouldst be pleased to impart to them more and more every day of Thy Spirit,

Who alone is good and truly the chief good, so that feeling fully convinced that Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, is King of kings, and Lord of lords, like as thou hast given Him all power in heaven and on earth, so they too may in their office have an eye above all to His worship and the extension of His Kingdom, governing those under them according to Thy will, so that we, enjoying stable peace both here and in every other part of the world, may serve Thee with all holiness and purity, and freed from the fear of our enemies, have ground to celebrate Thy praise during the whole period of our lives."*

One of the most touching scenes in the life of the Reformer was his farewell prayer for the Seigneury of Geneva just a month before his death. Unable to go to the Senate house to address the syndics and senators, out of respect to his failing strength they came in a body to his home to receive his parting words. After exhorting them to faithfulness in their divine task and entreating them to pardon his infirmities, Beza informs us that "he prayed to Almighty God that He would crown them more and more with His gifts, and guide them by His Holy Spirit, for the safety of the whole Republic, and then giving his right hand to each he left them in sorrow and in tears, all feeling as if they were taking a last farewell of their common parent.** So would Calvin in arms of prayer lift up every activity of the civil government into the hands of Him who established it.

* Tracts, Vol. II, page 111. Cp. West. Conf. Ch. XXIII, Sec. IV.

** Beza's Life of Calvin, Calvin's Tracts, I, xciii., Cp. Inst. I, p. 25., Letters, I, 186, 360.

In addition to the usual application of the word of God in public preaching and censure called forth in the process of discipline, in his official capacity as a minister Calvin constantly appeals to magistrates and princes, tendering his advice or censuring their shortcomings. This need not concern us except for one important consideration. As a man Calvin humbles himself before kings, princes and magistrates, treating them with all respect, honour and submission, and praying for their welfare; but as a minister in the Church of God he frankly and courageously measures their conduct by the acid test of the word of God, and instructs them accordingly.

Two or three excerpts from his letters will serve to indicate this attitude. In writing to the King of Poland he excuses his outspoken exhortation on the following ground: "I am not ignorant indeed nor forgetful of the vast distance which separates a person of my humble and abject condition from the exalted rank in which God has placed so great a king. But I, whom the King of kings has appointed a preacher of His Gospel, and a minister of His Church, call upon your majesty in His name, to make this work (of reformation) above all others your special care."* Again, in writing to the Earl of Hertford, Duke of Somerset, Regent of England during the minority of the young Protestant King Edward VI, Calvin reminds him: "I write in His name without advancing anything of my own, the whole is drawn from His own pure doctrine. Were I to look merely at the dignity and grandeur of your position,

* Letters, III, 245.

there would seem no access whatever for a man of my quality. But since you do not refuse to be taught of the Master whom I serve methinks I have no need to make you any long excuse or preface, because I deem you well disposed to receive whatsoever proceeds from Him."* To Duke Radziwill , a distinguished Polish noble, he writes: "I am not ignorant, most illustrious prince, that it is a very bold step for me, a man of mean birth and almost no reputation in the world, to address, by letter, a personage placed as you are in the very highest rank For though my condition is obscure, yet as you recognise in me one of the ministers of Christ, from your veneration for the Master Himself, I shall be allowed to have access to your highness."**

It is evident that Calvin viewed these epistolary activities as part of his ministerial task, and that he justified his advice or censure on the basis of his office as a minister of God and an interpreter of Scripture. He expects that his words will be received with respect because they are not written in his capacity as a private citizen, but as a representative of the Church. It may be objected that Calvin writes primarily about spiritual matters, which is true. Had he not regarded it as the State's

* Letters, II, 169-184.

** Letters, III, 133 ff. Cp. also Letters, III, 21, (To a Seigneur of Piedmont); III, 466 (To Admiral Coligny) - "I shall not make any longer excuses, being convinced that the reverence in which you hold my Master, will cause you to find good whatever you shall see proceeding from Him, and laid before you in His name," In Calvin's farewell words to the syndics and senators, after counselling them as to their religious duties, with equal zeal he exhorted them: "In the decision of civil causes let there be no partiality or hatred; let no one pervert justice by oblique artifices; let no one prevent the laws from having full effect; let no one depart from what is just and good" - in all things that the will of God be done. Tracts, I, xcii.

foremost duty to establish, protect and defend the true Church, it is doubtful if he would so freely have counselled kings and princes. He naturally writes from a strictly religious point of view, but the subjects with which he deals are kaleidoscopic in range, from the State's duties in regard to the reformation of the Church to the amorous affairs of the King of Navarre, from the necessity for laws to guard against drunkenness and adultery in England, from earnest appeals to German princes imploring their intercession in behalf of their persecuted Protestant brethren in France, to minute instructions regarding civil and religious problems in the realm of England; from frequent appeals in behalf of persecuted Waldenses to expressions of comfort, strength and cheer to Lord Grey and Admiral Coligny. Never did he write as a politician, only as a minister, yet his letters are filled with allusions to political subjects. Almost without exception, however, the latter refer to matters affecting moral or religious interests. Political questions of this type must ever command the attention of the Church. Calvin's purpose is evident, as he writes "in His name," as "His messenger," expounding "His word" to the whole range of life's problems.

Nor did Calvin merely address Protestant princes and magistrates, for he commends the purpose of God as expressed in Scripture to bitter enemy and admiring friend alike. A list of his correspondents reads like a directory of the political chiefs of his day. To mention a few; England is well represented by the Protector Somerset, Lady Anne Seymour, King Edward VI, Lord John

Grey and William Cecil; Scotland by the Earl of Arran and James Stuart, the Good Regent, not to speak of his influence upon John Knox and the British exiles in Geneva; France is represented by the King and Queen of Navarre, King Henry II, Admiral Coligny, King Charles IX, Prince of Condé, Prince Porcien, Duke de Longueville, and of course the Prefatory address of the Christian Institution to King Francis I; Poland is represented by King Sigismund Augustus and Duke Nicholas Radziwill; Sweden by its Prince Royal; Germany by the Duke of Wurttemberg, the Elector Palatine, William of Hesse, etc., and a long list of other notables of various countries, including such as the Duchess of Ferrara, the Emperor Charles V, and frequent epistles to the magistrates of Geneva, Bern, Zurich, Neuchâtel, etc.*

* Note. Calvin often acted as the spokesman, the apologist and emissary of the Genevan Republic, even in the arrangement of political alliances; e.g., Letters, IV, 167. Cp. Reyburn 149. Evidently criticism of^{calv} political activities was not unknown in his day, for in a letter to Nicholas Zerkinden he explains: "You will ask why I should mix myself up with these affairs which do not become my profession, and engender great animosity against me among many. Though rarely I meddle with these political matters, and am dragged on to them against my inclination, yet I sometimes allow myself to be persuaded to take part in them, when necessity requires The Senate, moreover, are never accustomed to send for me except when they are in difficulty for want of counsel; either because they think it unbecoming, or because they do not willingly implore assistance of others, or because they see that I myself am averse to it. I wish I had been at liberty to demand my exemption. But since I returned here fourteen years ago, when God held out His hand to me, men importunately solicited me, and I myself had no decent pretext for refusal, I have preferred to bestow my pains in pacifying troubles to remaining an idle spectator of them." Letters, Vol. III, 249 f.

Is it not strange that letters to such a galaxy of nobles should have issued from the pen of a man who says of himself: "I am scarcely ever, except when compelled by necessity, in the habit of writing to unknown persons"* "being ... naturally of a timid, soft and pusillanimous disposition."** There is but one explanation, namely, that Calvin spoke not for himself, but as a messenger of the King of kings to declare the will of God as expressed in Scripture. As such he was fearless, courageous, zealous for God's honour and the welfare of both commonwealth and Church.

It is true, that had Calvin succeeded in establishing synods, he would likely have preferred corporate expression of the Christian conscience as embodied in synodical recommendations. This would have been in line with his tendency to guard the Church against the idiosyncrasies of individual ministers. Pronouncements on social, economic and political problems having a moral or religious bearing by such bodies as the Federal Council of Churches in the United States are the logical development of Calvin's example in Geneva. Is there not an element of eternal worth in Calvin's ideal, to declare the whole counsel of God, cost what it may, to King or President, Parliament or Senate, bailie or alderman or ward boss? Even the separation of Church and State does not excuse the conscience of the Church from the duty to formulate and make known the truths of the Gospel as these

* Letters, III, 255.

** Dedication to "Psalms", xliii.

concern the public welfare. We have only too vividly seen the result of pagan political ideals as the governing basis of international disputes. Until the Church enthrones Christ in the political sphere, not in the sense of Erastianism or of a theocracy, but as the Church leads public men to voluntarily accept the way of the Master as the only hope of the world, it must confess itself an unworthy laggard in the task so nobly attempted by Calvin.

Calvin's activities as a legislator indicate still another means by which the Church may legitimately influence the life of the State. It is neither likely nor desirable that the average pastor shall have the juridical training or abilities of a Calvin. Yet the motives which underlay Calvin's activities as a legislator may well be emulated.* Calvin not only found scope for his ability in the formulation of his justly famous ecclesiastical polity, but in civil legislation as well. On his return from exile he was appointed a member of a commission of three to recodify the laws of Geneva. The bulk of this responsibility fell upon his shoulders, and he dealt with a multitude of subjects revealing a remarkable grasp of civil affairs. However, his indirect influence upon legislation is more germane to our purpose. His

* In Calvin as a legislator, cp. Henry, I, 354-365., A. M. Hunter 250-266., Fairbairn, 364 ff. Fairbairn gives it as his judgment that "Calvin was greater as a legislator than as a theologian, that we have less cause to be grateful to him for the system called Calvinism than for the Church he organised. His polity was a more perfect expression of the man than his theology" - a significant statement.

aim was most praiseworthy; his legislative activity was characterised by an intense hatred of evil, and by a determination to guard and vindicate the honour of God. In short he sought to insure that the Christian State placed as its objective the glory of the God it professed to serve, and brought its legislation into conformity with the moral law of Scripture.

If Calvin was convinced of the necessity for a new law he went to the Council and demanded its passage in the name of the Consistory. In other words he conceived it to be the duty of the Church, speaking through its official body, to use its influence to insure that civil legislation expresses the Christian conscience of the community. In Geneva, it is true, this all too often implied civil coercion in matters which in our day are more properly left to individual freedom of opinion. It has been noted above that Calvin was a legatee of a burden of "grandmotherly legislation." Yet even the force of such legislation can restrain evil and cast sheltering protection about the good; it can remove temptation from the weak and serve to develop a virile public opinion and civic conscience on social and moral evils.

It is comparatively easy to pick flaws in Genevan legislation, but very difficult to conserve the permanent elements therein which the Church to-day dare not lose if it be true to its mission. If by its silence it purchases the mild tolerance or open support of organised evil, the Church has lost its soul. No amount of mere preaching can purge it of its sin. No Christian will expect to

legislate men into the Kingdom of God, scarcely even into outer respectability, but the corporate Christian conscience must inform and educate the State, and cast its influence in the scale of legislation to remove from life the blotches of leprous vice and organised tyranny which make it well-nigh impossible for many to do right even if they would. In this attempt Calvin was a crusader, and, in fine, expanded and applied the dictum that the Church is its brother's keeper.

SUBMISSION AND RESISTANCE

With a gusto worthy of an apologist for the divine right of kings Calvin states in all its inflexible severity the Christian's duty of absolute submission to civil authority. Princes and magistrates are appointed by God, so he avers. "And certainly it were a very idle occupation for private men to discuss what would be the best form of polity in the place where they live, seeing these deliberations cannot have any influence in determining any public matter." Different types of government have been ordained by Providence in accordance with differing circumstances. The mere fact that there exists a given type of government is proof it is so only under God's sufferance. To anxiously long for a change is a wish "not only foolish and superfluous, but very pernicious All this, however, is said unnecessarily to those^{to} whom the will of God is a sufficient reason."* Calvin, it seems, would eternally perpetuate the status quo by clothing it with divine sanction.

* Inst. IV, xx, 8.

The duties of subjects toward their rulers may be conveniently stated under three heads: reverence, obedience and love, issuing in prayer for their prosperity. Reverence for magistrates is to be no mere lip service. Neither is it to be based on fear, but rather on loyalty to God. The magistrate possesses a delegated jurisdiction, and is a minister or ambassador of God. Obedience to him is thus analogous to our obedience to God. Even when, because of corruption, the man holding the office be worthy of our contempt rather than of our reverence, yet because of his office he is nevertheless to be held in the highest veneration. The second duty is that of unquestioning obedience, "whether in complying with edicts, or in paying tribute, or in undertaking public offices and burdens which relate to the common defense, or in executing any other orders."* To resist the magistrate is to resist God. Whatever the type of government, the Christian citizen must obey and submit to its authority. If any condition in public life needs correction such is to be undertaken by the constituted authorities and only at their order and under their direction. The people are "not (to) act tumultuously." An identical implicit obedience is to be accorded even to "an individual of the worst character, one most unworthy of all honour, if invested with public authority ...".**

As if this were not severe enough, we are informed that men should be subject to all princes "by whatever means they have so become, although there is nothing they less perform than the duty

* Ibid. Sec. 23.

** Ibid. Sec. 24, 25.

of princes..." We should "never entertain the seditious thought that a king is to be treated according to his deserts."* Is Calvinism then to be tied hand and foot to such a laissez-faire policy? We cannot but wonder how the persecuted Huguenots or the Puritans under Charles II relished this section of the Institutes. Undoubtedly at times we may gain a certain species of spiritual discipline by reflecting that such impious rulers are a scourge for our own sins, but this seems rather a cowardly way in which to better matters. For any relief we are left only one solace, prayer. Not even a word is said about the Church or synods as moulders of public opinion in bettering political condition. True, if it be God's will, He will curb the tyrant by raising up "manifest avengers from among His own servants" (such as Moses, the Judges, etc.), or "employ the fury of men who have other thoughts and other aims" overruling their evil intentions for the accomplishment of His righteous purposes.** But woe to the Christian who takes justice into his own hands to rid his land of tyrants. He may without blame reap the benefits secured by others who sin by overthrowing lawful authority; but as far as he is concerned he is to remember that vengeance is in God's hands, not his, and that it is his duty to suffer and obey. Thoroughly Lutheran such opinions, but scarcely calculated to inspire the religious system which bears Calvin's name.

But Calvin could not forget the ceaseless struggle for religious liberty in his native France. No one's heart was more wrenched than his at the cries of his brethren persecuted and

* Ibid. Sec. 25 and 27.

** " " 30.

martyred for their faith. The gruesome naked facts demanded a more just statement of the problem. So did his essentially active piety, which was uncompromising toward evil, and made him question if absolute submission was after all a full statement of the Christian attitude, leading him to seek some legitimate, Scriptural basis for a more humane and practical solution.

Hence Calvin admits the renowned exception which concerns the right, yea the duty of "magistrats inférieurs" to resist tyranny; "For when popular magistrates have been appointed to curb the tyranny of kings (as the Ephori, who were opposed to kings among the Spartans, or Tribunes of the people to consuls among the Romans, or Demarchs to the senate among the Athenians; and, perhaps there is something similar to this in the power exercised in each kingdom by the three orders, when they hold their primary diets); So far am I from forbidding these officially to check the undue license of kings, that if they connive at kings when they tyrannize and insult over the humbler of the people, I affirm that their dissimulation is not free from nefarious perfidy, because they fraudulently betray the liberty of the people, while knowing that by the ordinance of God, they are its appointed guardians."*

However, no justification for future rebellion can be found in the fact that "magistrats inférieurs" had to struggle valiantly for the retention of their rights as checks on the tyranny of kings. It is rather as if the political life of the 16th century, be it monarchical or republican, were to be put into a strait-

* Ibid. Sec. 31.

jacket and stereotyped for all eternity, except in so far as changes should be voluntarily made or forced through by God-ordained civil authorities. Moreover, it should be noted that this recognition of the right of resistance does not accord private individuals permission to take matters into their own hands, but merely duly chosen magistrates. If the latter are directly chosen by the people, the ultimate responsibility of course rests upon those who elect them. Thus the citizens of Geneva are morally responsible for the political condition of their city, at least to the extent of the four syndics whom they elect. If slack in their duty, they are disloyal to God. Yet for French Protestants to rebel in order to establish a republic would be highly sinful. It is interesting, however, to remember that Calvin himself ultimately applied this principle to justify the armed resistance of Henry of Navarre to obtain for himself that office which was his right as the next of blood, namely, the regency of France. To such a cause Calvin eventually gave his sympathy, and even raised arms to assist in the struggle.

The second exception to the dictum of absolute submission applied to the individual Christian believer, and was of far-reaching effect in the future struggles of Calvinistic peoples for civil and religious liberty. We are to be subject to all who rule over us, but "subject only in the Lord. If they command anything against Him, let us not pay the least regard to it we must always make the exception, nay, must be particularly careful that it (obedience to rulers) is not incompatible with obedience to Him to Whose will the wishes of all kings should be

subject." As Peter says: "We ought to obey God rather than men." We are not to "yield a slavish obedience to the depraved wishes of men, far less do homage to their impiety."* Calvin realises that disobedience to magistrates may bring peril or persecution, but the Christian will be consoled by the consciousness that he is doing right in rendering first obedience to God. Obedience to rulers, then, is due only in so far as it is compatible with the word of God, and we remember that the word carries its own message to the individual soul by the testimony of the spirit, so that the individual is the judge as to such compatibility. As Calvin interpreted this exception, it implied nothing more than a refusal to obey impious commands; it did not involve the right to take up arms against rulers; it looked only to the intervention of God Himself to right such wrongs.**

The best commentary on Calvin's theory of submission and resistance is to be found in his epistolary activities during the turbulent period following the death of Henry II of France in 1559. To detail these events would take a disproportionate period of time, yet it is valuable to note tendencies and to see how Calvin's theory met this very practical situation.

* Ibid. Sec. 32. Cp. Tracts, II, 135; Letters III, 377.

** It is interesting to note that while in the later editions of the Institutes there is a strengthening in the emphasis on the necessity for obedience to kings, in the 1559 edition the necessity of supreme obedience to God is likewise given increased emphasis, in that he cites with approval Daniel's refusal to obey the impious decree of the king, an echo of the struggles in France and of Calvin's own disobedience to the orders of the Genevan magistrates. v. Wernle, 163. In regard to the relation of Calvin and Zwingli on the question of resistance cp. Wernle 157 ff. Calvin would not confuse the offices of politician and preacher as Zwingli tended to do.

The Protestants in France were in desperate straits. In Paris officers had been sent in a house to house canvas to hunt them out like rats. It was almost impossible to escape their vigilance, for it was enough to render one suspect if one did not attend mass on feast days. Full of anguish Calvin opens up his heart to his friend, Bullinger, regarding the tyranny in Paris. "They not only make their way into bed chambers, but rummage beds, chests and coffers, that they may forthwith drag to prison those in whose possession they find a suspected book ... a much greater number of men have been cast into fetters than during the^{two} preceding years. The most loathsome dungeons are crowded with wretched individuals."* Yet in the midst of all this misery Calvin counselled meek submission for the sake of the Gospel. "We must wait patiently and calmly till our Avenger appear from on high."**

But increased persecution, culminating in the execution of Anne Dubourg, simply drove the harassed Huguenots to exasperation. Let those who have never faced death for Christ blame them. Hence the Huguenots determined to resist the tyranny of the princes of Lorraine, and under the leadership of the King of Navarre and the Prince de Condé joined in the Amboise Conspiracy, which was an attempt to seize the person of the young king and to substitute the guardianship of the Protestant Bourbons for that of the Catholic Guises. Little wonder; surely they had had just provocation. But Calvin frankly disapproved of the conspiracy and repelled the

* Letters, IV, 69.

** Ibid. 67.

"odious charge" that he and Bullinger had been responsible for fomenting revolution in France.

It is significant that the conspiracy so aroused popular sympathy in Geneva that sixty men, disregarding the outspoken remonstrances of Calvin, slipped out of the city to assist their hard-pressed brethren in France, which action Calvin characterised as "the inconsiderate zeal of the men of our party, who imagined they could obtain by disorder the liberty which was to be sought by other measures."* Calvin himself would have nothing to do with the conspiracy unless they should be perfectly on their guard not to shed blood, "for I declared it to be an inevitable consequence that from a single drop would immediately flow streams that would inundate France."** How true a prophecy was clearly manifested during the bloody history of the succeeding twelve years culminating in the horrible massacre of St. Bartholomew's. No one can doubt that the Huguenots had ample provocation to justify resistance, but had Calvin's advice been followed, who knows? Perhaps the death of martyrs would again have been the seed of the Church, and France might have embraced the Reformed faith. Surely a pacific expression of public opinion at this stage would have served their cause to better advantage.

Yet Calvin used every legitimate means, short of military force, to help his countrymen. Not only did he appeal to Navarre to intercede in the States General in their behalf, but he begged

* Ibid. 106.

** Ibid. 107.

the German princes to send an embassy to France to plead for the persecuted. Nor did he condemn all uprising against authority, for if a legitimate excuse could be found he was only too willing to embrace it. In fact he attempted to persuade the King of Navarre "to claim the regency of the kingdom that has been wrested out of his hands."* The only basis upon which resistance could be justified, according to Calvin, was that "if the princes of the blood demanded to be maintained in their rights for the common good, and if the Parliament joined them in their quarrel, then it would be lawful for all good subjects to lend them armed resistance."** A cause so dear to his heart as this he could not desert. Inasmuch as the Guises were still unlawfully in possession of the regency, he maintained that whatever mistakes had been made in the past, they must support their brethren now. Germany and Switzerland helped financially; England agreed to send soldiers, and Calvin wrote to churches exhorting them to provide liberally for the expenses of the war. All of which serves to prove that Calvin's real purpose was to found a living evangelical Church, and that in practise he did not invariably keep to his theory of the relationship between Church and State, if he could only accomplish this vital end.***

* Ibid. 109.

** Ibid. 176.

*** It is interesting to note that when Coligny threw in his lot with Condé in armed revolt, he put upon his standard the words, "The glory of God and freedom to King and Country," significant as showing the strong Calvinistic influence present even when armed revolt itself was opposed by Calvin. - Penning, 333.

The foregoing sketch indicates that the two exceptions to the dictum of absolute submission, even though exploited to the utmost, afforded but little justification for armed resistance to tyranny. In any case such a right was strictly limited to the "magistrats inférieurs," and even this seemed like a grudging admission given as more or less of an afterthought. True, the individual Christian must grant supreme obedience to God alone, but Calvin did not for a moment regard this as an excuse for political rebellion.

However, these exceptions hidden in the last two paragraphs of the Institutes proved to be germinal ideas which bore rather amazing fruit. Since passive resistance per se did not make a very good battlecry with which to combat tyranny and oppression, later Calvinists expanded these teachings of the Reformer and combined them with the principles of natural law. Such ideas as the ultimate sovereignty and inalienable rights of the people, popular representation in government, and the theory of a primitive social contract, were eagerly embraced by the early Calvinists. The "monarchomachist" writers (among them Calvinists like Buchanan, Hubert Languet, François Hotman, Lambert Daneau and Johannes Althusius)* presented them with a fuller outlined system of political thought which dovetailed with Calvinistic individualism and supplemented the Reformer's meagre justification of resistance. Thus natural law, to which Calvin had merely referred in passing, and

* V. Lang: "C. and Ref." esp. 72-76. If it be inquired how Calvinists could accept the theories of natural law which were of Roman Catholic origin, Lang indicates several considerations which made this possible: (a) the variability of the ideas in question, (b) their remoteness from the central truths of religion, (c) their

which in history had had its development among the scholastic theologians of the mediaeval ages, was grafted on to a Calvinistic doctrinal basis to justify resistance against tyrants. Indeed this principle was so expanded that failing the assistance of the "magistrats inférieurs," individual resistance and even tyrannicide were justified. Rather turbulent results were produced at times, of which Calvin surely would not have approved, yet on the whole it must be admitted that this Neo-Calvinistic political theory was potent in attaining the civil and religious liberties of Western Europe.

Yet when all allowance has been made for these influences of a later day, we must recognise that the inherently active nature of Calvin's own piety had already indelibly stamped itself upon the Church. Calvin himself in his Genevan activities had not exhibited the passive submission of a lamb led to the slaughter, but rather fought like a crusader full of righteous indignation, with an outspoken intolerance of all that he conceived to be contrary to the will of God as expressed in Scripture. Not even customs of hoary antiquity would be tolerated, if it could be shown that they were opposed to the word of God, or even that they were not enjoined by the word of God. He did not hesitate to call the State to task even though he did not countenance active resistance. After all, this piety of Calvin was of more far-reaching effect

principle of individualism, so akin to that of Calvinism, and (d) the compulsion of circumstances, (94 f.) Doctrinal and ecclesiastical conflicts could be settled by an appeal to religious principles, but when it came to political and social problems, inasmuch as Calvin had left no detailed theories, it was not strange that Neo-Calvinists turned to natural law.

than his theories of submission and resistance, and it need not cause surprise that subsequently Calvinists governed their conduct on the basis of the two exceptions rather than by an unquestioning acceptance of the dictum of absolute submission.

PEACE AND INTERNATIONALISM

A generation such as ours which has just engaged in the greatest holocaust of history need not be unduly shocked that Calvin did not exert himself more energetically in opposition to war. In fact, however, as a general tendency he did seek to counter persecution by Christlike submission. Such a principle forms the burden of his advice to his oppressed co-religionists in France. In common with his Christian inheritance Calvin realised that the truth of God should not trust itself to the arm of brute force, but to the power of the Spirit persuading the souls of men. Conservative by instinct, he did all that he could to encourage respect for authority, and to restrain his followers from conspiracy or rebellion. Yet the perilous insecurity of the Genevan Republic and the horrors of the Huguenot and Waldensian persecutions made it apparently imperative to resort to force for self-preservation. In the first instance this assumed the form of diplomatic negotiations, appeals to the German princes and to the magistracies of the Swiss cities, in all of which activities Calvin played a prominent part. Moreover, his unceasing endeavours to promote a union of the Swiss churches naturally led to a movement for mutual alliance between the states in which the several churches were located. His efforts

to restrain his brethren in France met as we have seen with little success. The pressure of the times made armed resistance almost inevitable, and once Calvin was gone, under the leadership of Beza and likeminded Calvinists there was formulated the theoretical justification of what had become a practical necessity.

Though justifying war under certain circumstances the Reformer stoutly maintained that the passions, self-interest and greed of rulers should never be recognised as a legitimate motive for armed conflict. Only one consideration should prompt them, namely, the public good, and war should never be resorted to unless states be "compelled by the strongest necessity."* Moreover, to Calvin's credit be it said, that he struck a heavy blow at the prevalent custom of Swiss soldiers serving as mercenary troops. This commercialisation of the war enterprise and degradation of men elicited his strong rebuke. January 3, 1558, the Council at his request declared that thenceforth the laws against foreign enlistment as mercenaries should be strictly enforced.**

Calvinism, as later developed, was undeniably militant; no one can visualise it without its Covenanters, its Huguenots, its Dutch Patriots, its Ironsides. The piety of Calvinism regarded life itself under the guise of a campaign for the Kingdom of God.

* Inst. IV, xx, 12. Cp. Troeltsch "Soziallehren" 723-728.

** Opera, xxi, 683, quoted Reyburn, 208 .

Yet this militancy did not develop because of a love of war, but had its roots deeply imbedded in the struggles of common men, not for conquest, but for religious and civil liberty. Moreover, there is an element in Calvin's teaching on war which sounds a distinctly gratifying note: "For if we are to do far more than that heathen demanded, who wished war to appear as desired peace, assuredly all other means must be tried before having recourse to arms."*

To-day Geneva's chief claim to distinction lies in the fact that it is the acknowledged home of internationalism. In fact it has been such since the 16th century, and no single person has had a tithe the influence of Calvin in making it so. One of the most bitter complaints the burghers of Geneva made against Calvin was that this foreigner was cluttering up their city with aliens from every land, whom he insisted on putting into places of authority. In fact fully a third of Geneva's already cosmopolitan population consisted of religious refugees from every land of Europe. It is doubtful if Calvin could ever have established any sort of theocracy in Geneva had it not been for the influence of these refugees. The Reformer's correspondence reveals a width of interest and breadth of view that completely transcends nationalism. English, Scots, Poles, Swedes, Dutch, French, Germans, Italians, Swiss, all are one in the brotherhood of Christ and the fellowship of His Church. The group of British refugees under John Knox and the Italian exiles were welcomed and as a place of worship granted the use of the Church of Notre Dame la Nueve standing hard by the Cathedral. In fact Calvin did not have the slightest intention of

* Inst IV vv 12

keeping Geneva for the Genevans. He aimed to make it a city of God, and hence, incidentally, international in its scope. However much the patricians of Geneva opposed this policy, Calvin revealed an internationalism worthy of a follower of Christ, and helped to render the Swiss city peculiarly amenable to a like tendency. The Reformer's spirit outlived all external forms and he whose love to Christ and the Church transcended all the bounds of nationalism pointed the Church and city to a similar path.

It surely is no accident that the two peace capitals of the world, Geneva and The Hague, are two centers where Calvin's influence has always been strong, and usually predominant. The Calvin who sought to bring peace in his own day, who counselled moderation and non-resistance even in the midst of persecution, who advocated that every other means should be tried before recourse is had to arms, Calvin the internationalist, the world has inadvertently honoured to-day in that an International Court of Justice and a League of Nations grace two of the cities most closely associated with his name and influence. Worthy of note is it that the great healer of the wounds of the world, the Red Cross, had its origin in Geneva, and that the city of Calvin houses the headquarters of the Red Cross, the World's Committee of the Young Men's Christian Association and the League of Nations, a triad of service, working for health, character and peace.*

* Was it a mere accident that 350 years after the Reformer's death, Woodrow Wilson, the son of a Presbyterian manse, and himself a Presbyterian elder, became the father of modern internationalism, and led in the foundation of a League of Nations with its seat in Geneva? At any rate a peculiar interest attaches to the fact that these two, so similar in temperament and in the measure of their world influence, have impressed upon Geneva, and through it upon

CALVINISM AND DEMOCRACY

In the strict sense it does not fall within the scope of the present thesis to present an account of the relation between Calvinism and democracy. Yet the Calvinistic ecclesiastical polity and certain doctrinal tenets peculiar to Calvinism have had such a potent influence in the development of democracy that a discussion of their fruitage in the political sphere will at least throw indirect light upon the ideals of the Calvinistic Church. Though this be a digression it will at least serve to indicate the focal points at which these ideals have affected subsequent political history. Democracy per se, while not of course a conscious goal of the Calvinistic Church, was nevertheless, to an astonishing degree, a direct by-product of its definite religious work. It is an incontrovertible fact of history that there has been an intimate affinity between Calvinism in religion and democracy in the State. It surely is no accident that Switzerland, Holland and Scotland, democratic in their civil life, were Calvinistic in religion. Moreover, the struggles of the Huguenots of France, and more particularly of the Puritans of England and America indicate a congeniality between Calvinism and democracy which cannot be attributed to mere chance. We look in vain for similar

the world, something of their own character and international spirit. Should it seem strange that Geneva, the foundation stone of Western Protestantism, has after the passage of years become the fountainhead of internationalism? The international spirit has been a more prominent note in Calvinism than in any other of the Protestant bodies. It were a blessing if the religious union for which Calvin laboured should find its counterpart in a world-wide Christian movement for peace.

democratic movements among the Catholic peoples of Southern Europe, and note that even Lutheran countries were laggards in the establishment of democracy. But it would be a mere surface judgment to conclude that democracy in civil life was the conscious aim or definite result of Calvinism in religion. Many other influences contributed to this end, particularly sectarian and Socinian ideas of religious liberty and mediaeval theories of natural law. It were even more superficial to fasten upon some of the undoubted aristocratic features of Calvin and of the Reformed faith and hence conclude that anything issuing from such a source must be anti-democratic. This much is certain, that there is a mutual attraction between Calvinism and democracy, and that normally in countries where the former has prevailed, democratic institutions have not tarried long in establishing themselves. Calvinism has been a prominent, though by no means the sole influence producing democracy.*

In the Institutes, during the course of his discussion of civil government, Calvin infers that monarchy is prone to tyranny. Aristocracy, on the other hand, leads to "the faction of a few," while democracy is inclined to sedition. Yet he frankly states it as his conviction that the form of government "which greatly surpasses the others is aristocracy, either pure or modified by popular government." It is worthy of note that such is the system of political life implied in the Old Testament species of theocracy and also that it bears a distinct resemblance to the republican

* Kuyper, the Dutch theologian, exclaims: "Calvinism has captured and guaranteed to us our constitutional civil rights"... (p.44) true in the main, though Kuyper fails to recognise the contribution of the sects and mediaeval theories of natural law.

oligarchy of Geneva. According to Calvin it has been proven by experience that "owing to the vices or defects of men, it is safer and more tolerable when several bear rule that they may thus mutually assist, instruct and admonish each other as I willingly admit that there is no kind of government happier than where liberty is framed with becoming moderation, and duly constituted so as to be durable, so I deem those very happy who are permitted to enjoy that form, and I admit that they do nothing at variance with their duty when they strenuously and constantly labour to preserve and maintain it."* Wernle has indicated that while in the 1536 edition of the Institutes Calvin undertook the defense of monarchy, in later editions he recognises a republican type of government as equally if not more desirable.** This change in emphasis may be partially attributed to the influence of Geneva's example.

But though Calvin expressed his preference he states quite frankly that under whatever form of government God has placed men, their one duty is to submit. God has his own reasons for establishing monarchy in one country, and aristocracy or democracy in another. Discussion as to which is the better form is purely academic, as in any given case no change is possible. Yet Calvin's frankly expressed preference proved to be of real influence in the case of his followers who had embraced the non-Calvinistic theories of natural law, and to whom rebellion became a legitimate procedure.

* Inst. IV, xx, 8.

** Wernle, 159 ff.

Calvin very wisely refrains from attempting to give Biblical sanction to any specific type of government. Scriptural taciturnity coupled with his practical good sense saved him from this pitfall. The New Testament keeps to principles, leaving these to work themselves out in definite shape as men are guided by the Holy Spirit under the changing conditions of the centuries.

Calvin was no friend of pure democracy in either Church or State. This is evidenced by the fact that he was not at all intimate with the masses. The Genevans revered rather than loved him. They deferred to his judgment, but did not seek his friendship. He says himself that he distrusted and despised the rabble, and one must admit that the fickle, pleasure loving folk of Geneva were not of a stamp to invite confidence or trust. Yet in the case of Calvin there was no outbreak against the people such as stained the escutcheon of Luther in his inexcusable severity toward the Peasant's Revolt. Calvin mistrusted the people, but he was not bitter against them. Nor was he so unapproachable as historians have painted him. As he said of himself: "I am in the habit of listening to the meanest and most despised of the common people."* His heartfelt concern for the welfare of the poor, mendicants, sick, persecuted, and friendless, utterly oblivious of class distinctions, is a fact we dare not forget. It is not the voice of an unapproachable, unsympathetic autocrat which we hear in a letter written to Viret on the occasion of the outbreak of plague in Geneva. Calvin was one of three ministers who offered

* Letters, III, 431.

themselves to visit the plague-infected Genevese, though the action meant almost certain death. "So long as we are in the ministry, I do not see that any pretext will avail us, if, through fear of infection, we are found wanting in the discharge of our duty when there is most need of our assistance."* Only the Council's blank refusal to grant him permission kept him from performing this dangerous task of tender mercy.

Yet we need not wonder at Calvin's distrust of the masses. Fresh in his mind were the excesses of communism incident to the establishment of the Anabaptist Zion in Münster. This unfortunate occurrence rendered the entire Reformed movement more conservative than it would otherwise have been. It became necessary to disabuse the minds of rulers of the suspicion that Protestantism sought to overturn society and replace monarchy by anarchy. The marvel is that the democratic elements in Calvinism were strong enough to counteract and even overshadow the forces calculated to produce a reactionary political philosophy. Compared with its contemporaries, not present day ideals, the Reformed faith was definitely liberal and progressive without being revolutionary. Subsequently it even assumed the latter aspect, and to hereditary tyrants Calvinism became a synonym of anarchy.

Lindsay, the Scottish historian, avers that "Calvin was a democrat intellectually and by silent principle." It was never more unconsciously displayed than in the preface to the Christian

* Letters, I, 334.

Institution addressed to King Francis I ... "the very simplicity and perfect frankness of the address give the impression of one who is speaking on equal terms with his peer. All suggest the Christian democrat without^a trace of the revolutionary." * True as this is, and undoubtedly democratic in tone though much of his teaching was, Calvin the man remained an aristocrat, somewhat aloof from the people, somewhat distrustful of them, with an eye to their best interests to be sure, but without entering intimately into their experiences. Himself an aristocrat, the system which he founded probably more than any other single influence tolled the death knell of autocracy.

What then is the source of the democratic "urge" in Calvinism which caused this paradox? We have inferred that the Genevan system of government caused Calvin to be more sympathetic to the idea of popular control. As Troeltsch asserts, **there is no doubt that Geneva did present a system of government which enabled Calvin more easily to realise his ideal of a Bibliocracy. Had Geneva been a monarchy the princely power would very likely have crushed any theocratic movement within the Church. This much is certain, that without the Genevan background the development of a Bibliocracy would have been most difficult, if not impossible. Calvin would recognise this, and not unlikely this influenced him in his preference for an aristocracy bordering on popular control as the type of government best suited to carry into effect his ideal of a Bibliocracy. The subsequent congeniality of Calvinism and democracy

* Lindsay, Vol. II, p.155, quoting Lemonnier, Histoire de France^(Paris 1903) VI.38.

** "Soziallehren," 681 ff.

was thus rendered easier because of the influence of the Genevan cultural system upon the primitive Calvinistic Church. The Genevan thirst for liberty, which never died in spite of the development of an oligarchy, undoubtedly impressed its influence upon Calvinism.

Yet a good case can be made out for the opposite view that Calvin, instead of being captivated by Genevan democracy, aided and abetted its gradual crystallisation into an oligarchy. During the time Calvin worked in Geneva the undeviating tendency in the Republic's life was a movement from popular control to an almost absolute oligarchy, not from aristocracy to democracy. This centralisation of the power of the government in the hands of the Council of 24 was finally accomplished in 1555 when Calvin's influence was at its height. It is certain that the curtailment of the rights of the General Assembly of the people was made with his hearty approval. By a complex system of cooptation in the election of councillors and by the limitation of the agenda of the larger councils and the General Assembly to those matters which had been previously referred to them by the Council of 24, the proud Republic of Geneva was forced to bow to a little coterie of obstructors of the people's will. It should be borne in mind, however, that it was this very concentration of power which enabled the little Republic, so hard-pressed, to present a strong front against its many enemies. Even modern democracies voluntarily curtail their power and convert themselves into virtual autocracies in time of war. Moreover, in Geneva this tendency to concentrate power in the hands of a few antedated Calvin's arrival by seventy-

five years. Geneva would doubtless have developed into such an oligarchy regardless of Calvin; in fact, it was only his insistent fight for the autonomy of the Church which prevented the utter absorption of the ecclesiastical power as well by the State. Geneva possessed no democracy as we understand the term. It is difficult to see how the impact of an oligarchic Geneva upon an aristocratic Calvin could have played the predominant part in rendering Calvinism congenial to democracy. We must seek elsewhere for the chief sources of such a congeniality.

The system of ecclesiastical polity which Calvin established is one such source. The most stunning blow to tyranny within the Church and the promotion of a democratic ecclesiastical polity is to be found in the institution of a lay eldership. In spite of the fact that in Geneva Calvin was unable to secure the election of elders by the people of the Church, the establishment of the Consistory did accord Christian laymen a post of vital responsibility in Church affairs. This not only served to protect the Church from a possible tyranny of the pastors, but in reality also was potent in the production of a body of trained, Biblically grounded, spiritual laymen, who were to take a leading part in the spread of the Reformed faith and in future struggles for civil and ecclesiastical liberty.

As will be noted in a later connection (See Ch. VI) a species of lay control in the exercise of Church discipline approximating a lay eldership had previously been established by Oecolampadius

in Basel in 1530 and by Bucer in Ulm in 1531, and later in Strassburg. However, such attempts were on a very limited scale and met with indifferent success or failure. The same cannot be said of John à Lasco, whose influence along this line was much more enduring. This Polish priest was first attracted to the Reformed doctrine through contact with Erasmus and Zwingli at Basel and Zurich in 1525. Nine years later he formally embraced the new faith. In 1543 he removed to Emden where he was in charge of the Protestant work. Being an administrator of no mean skill he succeeded in putting into operation what approximated the Presbyterian polity, including an eldership to enforce discipline. He refused the invitation of the Duke of Prussia to oversee the churches in his territory because the Duke would not agree that the new Church should be independent of the State. In 1550, at the invitation of Cranmer and under the patronage of the Protector Somerset, he was made pastor of the foreign refugee Church in London, composed of several thousand French, Germans and Italians. He was given free rein and hence established the same type of church government as in Emden. Moreover, his influence was not confined to the refugee Church alone, as he had oversight of certain other London churches as well. His "Forma ac ratio - " subsequently proved effective in the development of the lay eldership both in Britain and abroad. This teaching he spread not only in London and among the refugees, but in Friesland and Poland. Calvin's correspondence indicates that he followed the career of à Lasco with the greatest interest.* How-

* e.g., Letters, II, 432 f.

ever, Calvin antedated à Lasco's work in Emden by several years, and as far as primitive Calvinism was concerned à Lasco was influenced by it rather than vica versa. It was Calvin who first put the lay eldership on a permanent basis and restored to the common man a position of power in the Church which he had not held since apostolic days.

The revival of a lay diaconate within the Church (See Ch. VII) involved the assumption of responsibility by still another group of laymen. Moreover in France elders and deacons were admitted to the synods, thus giving the laity power in the higher courts of the Church, though this was not in accord with Calvin's practise. Werdermann suggests the plausible explanation that this was not done by Calvin because the laity in Geneva already possessed such a strong influence upon the Church due to the large amount of civil control in ecclesiastical affairs.*

A lay eldership does not of course imply pure democracy, nor even, as practised in primitive Calvinism, representative democracy. It is government by lay elders, not by the mass of the people. Yet the people do stand as a corrective to any abuse of power on the part of the elders. They are to chose the elders, (though in practise in France this custom was displaced by a system of complex mutual cooptation, and in Geneva the elders were chosen by the Council); also excommunication is to be pronounced only in the presence and with the knowledge and consent of the entire Church (though, as we have seen, this likewise was not done in Geneva).

* Werd. 328.

In other words, without countenancing mass control, the Reformer is anxious to guard against any human tyranny within the Church, whether tyranny of the clergy or of a lay eldership, lest in either case there be an impairment of the headship of Christ. He is the source of all authority in the Church. In order to conserve His headship there must be a system of checks and balances in the human control of Church affairs, lest either clergy, elders or the mass of the people gain too predominant a control in their own hands.

In modern times under the presbyterian form of government elders are popularly regarded as representatives of the people, to make known in presbytery, synod and assembly the points of view and wishes of their electorates. As such the modern system, speaking after the analogy of politics, is a representative democracy. When we discover, therefore, that in primitive Calvinism there was a measure of popular control in the choice of elders, it seems natural to assume that elders were regarded as representatives of the people, and thus in this to discover a democratic impulse in Calvinism. But this is to mistake outer appearance for reality, to confuse the motive with the result. The democratic impulse in Calvin's ecclesiastical polity lies not in the conception of elders as representatives of the people, but in the mere fact of the existence of such a large measure of lay control in specifically ecclesiastical affairs. It is difficult for us to realise what a break with custom this was, how far from the spirit of a mediaeval hierarchy. But it is this specific break which marks the return to the democratic simplicity of primitive Christianity.

Rieker has shown how mistaken it is to read into Calvin's theory of lay eldership the modern conception of elders as representatives of the local Church. Calvin does not regard the body of Church members as the ultimate source of ecclesiastical authority. Such authority is in Christ alone, Who is the Head of the Church. In the exact sense a system of representative democracy was not what Calvin intended to establish. He sought to uphold the sovereignty of God, the headship of Christ, not the sovereignty of the people. Lay elders curb any possible tyranny on the part of the clergy and lest they likewise become tyrannical, are in turn subject to a measure of popular control. Calvin's purpose is evident, namely, to guard against human tyranny. The elders are not so much representatives to carry out the mandates of their electorates, as representatives of the Church universal, that is of all the elect, and hence answerable to God alone. Rieker thus summarizes the conclusions of his studies along this line: "Calvin is far removed from seeing in the office-bearers of the Church representatives of the Church in the modern sense, mandataries of a will of the people standing over them the point in question for him is not that the Church possess an organ for its will, representative of its interests, but that Christ, the Lord of the Church have servants who execute His will in and through the Church. Therefore the elders are to him as the spiritual bearers of an independent office ordained by God, officers of Christ, the Lord of the Church, who carry on their task according to His command, and are answerable to Him alone. Not the Church members are the

source from which the authority of the Church office-bearers issues, but Christ, the Head of the Church to Whom is given all authority. The ministers and elders represent not the Church but Christ, exactly as in a monarchical state public officers represent the monarch."*

Though there is a veto power in the hands of the people in the election of the ministers, and though Calvin's theory included a measure of popular control in the election of elders, the people, as it were, are thought^{of}/as acting on behalf of God, and those chosen as primarily responsible to God, not to those who elect them. As Calvin says regarding the government of the Church: God "uses the ministry of men, by making them, as it were, His substitutes, not by transferring His right and honour to them, but only doing His own work by their lips, just as an artificer uses a tool for any purpose employing men to represent His own person."**

We are constantly impressed by the fact that Calvin views even the popularly elected magistrate as primarily responsible not to those who elect him, but to God. The theocratic principle pervades every sphere; magistrates, elders, ministers are accountable in the first instance to God. In short Calvin's motive is not to further democracy or a representative ecclesiastical polity, but solely to safeguard the headship of Christ in His Church. Yet to minimize the representative character of the office-bearers in the early Reformed Church does not in the least detract from the

* Rieker, 141-142. Cp. Lang, "Ref. und Gegen." 167 ff.

** Inst. IV, iii, 1.

force of the fact that laymen were for the first time given such wide sweeping powers in Church government, and therein lies a deal of democratic leaven. The significant fact is that laymen were considered worthy to represent God in His Church. Not pompous priests in mitre and cassock, but shop-keepers, farmers, artisans, magistrates, teachers are to exercise the power of the keys, all on an equal footing because they are all alike children of God. King James discerned this democratic tendency in Calvinism, and at the Hampton Court Conference in 1604 complained with some asperity: "A Scottish presbytery as well agreth with a Monarchy as God and the Devill. Then Jacke, and Tom, and Will, and Dick shall meet and at their pleasure censure me and my Councell, and all our proceedings."* Thus did the worthy monarch exhibit more than his usual acumen.

Let them be chosen by the people, Calvin says, "that no one may feel himself aggrieved in giving an account of his life to the elders."** It is not a far cry from this to the conception that the elders are the representatives of the people, and it need occasion no surprise that with such a polity once established the dictum of the sovereignty of the people soon penetrated into the Church so admirably fitted to put it to expression.

But the glory of primitive Calvinism is that it placed in the foreground man's responsibility to God. Modern representative

* Walker, 407 f. Calvin himself little visualised the impetus to democratic ideas which the establishment of a lay eldership involved.

** Letters, IV, 348.

democracy in either Church or State might well take a lesson from this. A slavish responsibility to the whims of a local electorate or Church party might well be tempered by a sense of duty to the whole body, and above all by a deep consciousness of accountability to Almighty God. Let either the people or their representatives forget this primary responsibility, and representative institutions alone will not save democracy. They will prove but a flimsy scaffolding which of itself can never accomplish the laborious task of building a Christian civilisation. Not only so, but a grasp of this principle would convince the Christian electors in State as well as Church that it is their duty to insure that their voice is the voice of God, and to feel their responsibility to Him in the choice of their representatives.

In company with Lutheranism the Reformed Church denied the efficacy of hierarchical mediation between the individual soul and its God, and so broke down the autocratic caste system which had separated the laity from the clergy. Calvinism proceeded to press the doctrine of the universal priesthood of all believers to even greater lengths than had Lutheranism. Not only did it deny priestly pretensions, but it insisted on the parity of the clergy, the equality of pastor and people, the participation of laymen in the rulership of the Church, the popular veto in the choice of ministers, and the consent and approbation of the people in the act of excommunication.

Moreover, in the exercise of Church discipline Calvinism developed within itself a democratic influence, the potency of which

it only vaguely realised. Church discipline assumed the role of a divine leveler. No distinction was made between the Queen of Navarre, the Duchess of Ferrara, the Genevan syndic, Corna, the minister, Henry de la Mare, and the lowly day labourer, the weaver, the farmer, the housewife. All classes and conditions of men, of whatever rank of society, king or peasant, magistrate or artisan, all members of the Church regardless of station had their conduct gauged by the standard of God's word. In the words of Calvin to his friend, Farel: "For two things are already matter of public talk, that there is no hope of impunity since even the first people of the city are not spared, and that I show no more favour to friends than those opposed to me."*

That these were not idle words is indicated by the fact that Calvin would not even permit members of his own household to escape punishment for their sins. (Cp. Chapter VII, Section on Family.) Members of the family of Francis Favre, one of Geneva's leading patricians, were often summoned before the Consistory to give an account of their scandalous behaviour. On their plea that such leading citizens as they should not be subjected to such a common indignity, Calvin retorted that their high station would not secure immunity to them, and that their house was not inviolably sacred; "that so long as they were in Geneva, they would strive in vain to cast off obedience to the laws; for were there so many diadems in the house of the Favres as frenzied heads, that that would be no barrier to the Lord being superior."** Such a system, however

* Letters, II, 40 f.

** Ibid. p. 39.

autocratic, however imperfectly carried into execution, could not fail to impress Christians with a sense of their equality in the sight of God. It did not do away with the Huguenot nobility, or the Dutch princes, or the Genevan patricians, but it gave to all classes a consciousness of their kinship, their solidarity and their common accountability to God.

Again, the basis of the democratic element in Calvinism has been sought for in the fact that Calvin "represents the Bible accessible to every individual believer by the Holy Spirit as the one source and norm of faith, as the sole authority."* To this Rieker pointedly replies that were this the basis Lutheranism would present the same democratic tendency as Calvinism, for it also looked upon the Bible as its sole norm and authority. The open Bible and absolutism are not necessarily incompatible. But surely it should be remembered that Lutheranism did not look to the Bible for details of ecclesiastical polity, minutiae of ethics, patterns for legal and political programs, as Calvinism tended to do. Lutheranism was satisfied to find the basis of faith in Scripture, and did not directly concern itself as Calvinism did with the periphery of the Church's task, in the political, ethical and social spheres. It was Calvinism's very insistence that these spheres also must be made subject to the will of God expressed in Scripture, which made it righteously intolerant of all conditions which seemed to negate the principles or example of Scripture. True, the only political pattern in the Bible is the theocracy of old Israel .

* Kampschulte, "Calvin," I, 628, quoted Rieker, 182, Note.

But the Old Testament insistence on the moral, social and political life of the people did have a profound influence on Calvinism, in developing a feeling of responsibility for the physical and moral, as well as the strictly religious needs of every individual in the State. Hence the term "open Bible" possessed for Calvinism a wider connotation than in the case of Lutheranism. Herein lay both weakness (legalism) and strength (the application of the truth of God to every sphere of life).

Even more significant is the fact that for Calvin the basis of religious certainty is no longer the infallible voice of the Church, but rather the "testimonium Spiritus Sancti" attesting the truth of the word of God to the individual Christian. No longer is a lone monk, a learned doctor or an exalted Pope the sole or even chief recipient of God's truth, but equally with them the lowliest individual may receive the truths of the word. As Calvin expresses the principle in his letter to Sadoleto: "Give me, I say not some unlearned man from among the people, but the rudest clown, and if he is to belong to the flock of God, he must be prepared for that warfare which He has ordained for all the godly the only sword with which he can fight is the word of the Lord." He dare not be made dependent on the learning of others. "He must forsake men, and look directly to God it is God alone who enlightens our minds to perceive His truth, who by His Spirit seals it to our hearts, and by His sure attestation to it confirms our conscience." Not that this will necessarily lead to a complete knowledge of the word of God, but "I only contend, that so

long as they insist on the word of the Lord, they are never so caught as to be led away to destruction."* Not even the Church, nor the theologian, nor the minister stands between the soul and God. Each individual soul, however humble and mean, may be immediately aware of the truth of God in His word as attested by the testimony of the Spirit. Here is individualism par excellence! Here is a carte blanche to freedom of thought, Biblical criticism; in fact, as Doumergue styles it, Calvin thus democratised the theological method.** Probably the Reformer himself would scarcely recognise, much less approve of the brood of democratic ideas which resulted from this source.

Of even greater potency in the promotion of the democratic "urge" within Calvinism was the doctrine of election. The election of God recognises no distinction of class, knowledge or rank. Its sole basis is the sovereign will of God. Peasant, theologian, pauper, king, artisan, magistrate, weaver, seamstress - how artificial, how temporary, how futile are such distinctions beside the eternal, unchangeable divine election. What is the glory of a Dives, what the power and/cruelty of the Guises? They exist but for the twinkling of an eye. Though Calvin himself did not so apply it, the logical result of the doctrine of election was the creation of a new order of society, the chosen, a divine democracy, beside which all earthly distinctions fade into utter insignificance

* Tracts, I, 52 f. Cp. Inst. I, vii, 5.

** Doumergue, "Princeton Theol. Rev." Oct. 1909. P. 550.

It developed a new and virile individualism unknown to Catholicism or Lutheranism, and invested with a new worth the personality of the individual, bidding him, as the basis of assurance, work for the Kingdom of God in the sphere of life in which God has placed him, and strive to bring all into accord with "the pattern in the mount," the word of God.*

It should be noted, however, that this individualism did not regard the individual as an end in himself, in the sense of a more modern and pagan use of the term, but as responsible to God, to use all of his capacities for the work of God's Kingdom. Moreover, it should be remembered that while Calvin's doctrine of election involved equality of the elect before God, he did not interpret it as implying equality among men. Men are equal only in the sense of all alike being "utterly devoid of goodness" and worthy of the wrath of God.** There is equality in inability; all are lost sinners before God. As such, how dare one domineer over another, how dare one regard himself as in himself superior? All the elect are equal except only in so far as distinctions are resultant from the gifts of God in differing talents, powers, posts of authority, etc. There may be superiority of office, but not of worth. Moreover, even the advantages of the socially privileged are balanced by an equal responsibility to the community, to the Church and to the Kingdom. As Troeltsch has observed, inequalities tended to

* "The Reformed conception of predestination ... invests the individual elect with a consciousness of his infinite worth, in comparison with which also the highest earthly position and rank sinks to nothing." Rieker, 182 Note. "Under such a system of belief, artificial distinctions created by accidents of birth will logically pass away." Douglas Campbell, "The Puritan in Holland, England and America," II, 10 f. quoted Rieker, 182.

** Inst. II. I. 8.

dissolve in such a system because of the sense of communal responsibility and solidarity which Calvinism engendered. With God alone as sovereign the pretension of a prince or king is revealed in all its pettiness.* As has been often noted, Calvinism, while it did not of itself break down class distinctions, enabled men to see the meaninglessness of such distinctions.

Mere mention can be made of such influences as the "cri au peuple" in the sermon, by which the ministers in appealing to this forum curbed the activities of the grasping patricians. Moreover, the establishment on a firm basis in Geneva of universal, free, compulsory education, the bulwark of modern democracy, trained the general citizenry of the Republic.**

As if something else were needed to crystallise the democratic impulse Calvin democratised music, the voice and soul of the people's religion. Doumergue has indeed rendered us his debtor in recovering for us a proper appreciation of the debt we owe Calvin in the development of the religious singing of the people. Catholicism had possessed its grand chants and choruses, in an unknown tongue.

"While one portion of the choristers intoned a Sanctus or an Incarnatus, others, accompanied by the crowd sang words like these:

'Robin loves me' and in the Vatican, the choir leader would speak to the Holy Father of the Magnificat, 'Margot, in a garden,' or of the Mass, 'Oh Venus the beautiful.'"*** Even the Council of

* Cp. Tr. "Soziallehren," 672 ff.

** Cp. the discussion in Chapter VII. A. M. Hunter reminds us that to Calvin also belongs the honour of having introduced the modern system of legislative checks. 255.

*** Doumergue, "Princeton Theol. Rev." Oct. 1909, 529-552.

Trent, a body not noted for its courage, intellect or integrity, found it necessary to protest against the impure music used in the Church.

Calvin insisted that Church music should be in the language of the people "that the hearts of all might be moved and exalted."* Germany called the new Psalter the "siren of Calvinism," and it was in truth the Psalter in the vernacular which took the message of the Evangel into the very camp of the French courtiers, which inspired the Covenanters in the "killing time" and the Dutch in their struggles for freedom. The Reformer played no inconsiderable part in this popularisation of the metric Psalter. He himself translated into metre a number of the Psalms. He later in large part adopted the Psalms of Marot, and had them set to simple, stately music suitable to their themes and introduced them into the Church of Geneva, which thus became a pioneer in Psalm singing. Because this new departure in music voiced in every day language the deepest aspirations of men, it was a prime factor in the democratising of Church worship.**

It should not be overlooked, also, that Calvin's approval of the legitimacy of resistance on the part of "magistrats inférieurs" was in itself the opening of a sluice to democratic ideas which far exceeded the Reformer's intent. The principle that when commands of the authorities contravene the word of God obedience to them is not only not obligatory, but a sin against God was of even

* Ibid. 537.

** Cp. A. M. Hunter^{Ch.} XV for a more detailed account of the manner in which Calvin furthered this aspect of divine worship.

more effect in developing the democratic impulse; for who is the judge of Scripture but the Christian man as the Spirit speaks to him in and through the word? It was no accident that subsequently Geneva became the fountainhead of the democratic movement, that from its presses the principle of the sovereignty of the people was sent forth side by side with the religious doctrines which were its legacy from Calvin. Hotman published his "Franco-Gallia" at Geneva, John Knox, "The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Montrous Regiment of Women," Goodman, "How Superior Powers Ought to be Obeyed by their Subjects and Wherein They May Lawfully Be by God's Word Disobeyed and Resisted," Mornay, "Legitimate Power of the Prince towards the People, and of the People towards the Prince" and, most significant of all, Beza, the friend and biographer of Calvin, his proclamation of the sovereignty of the people in his "De Jure Magistratum."*

Beza could not view the horrible massacre of St. Bartholemew's with equanimity and frankly preached that if no other means remains to curb such tyranny armed revolution is permissible. Though he did not neglect to emphasise the older teaching of Christian submission, yet he maintained the legitimacy of rebellion against an authority so completely degenerated that it opposes the first and second tables of the Decalogue. Combining the religious principles of Calvin with the mediaeval theories of natural law he frankly preached the sovereignty of the people in the words: "the people are not born

* V. Doumergue Ibid. 550 f., Cp. Tr. "Soziallehren," 687 f., Ruffini, 508.

for the magistrates, but, on the contrary, the magistrates for the people." Any system tends under stress to develop in accordance with its extreme rather than its conservative elements; hence it need not surprise that this more radical interpretation of Beza and his party should gradually supplant the more conservative teachings of Calvin in regard to subjection and resistance.

In view of the democratic "urge" in Calvinism and the fact that the framework of its polity is built on lines which in subsequent history have become closely associated with representative democracy, it may be argued that representative government is a projection into the political sphere of the Calvinistic ecclesiastical polity. There is much to support such a view. As the local Church is to be governed by its elders, chosen by the people, and as above the consistory there exists the presbytery, and finally the synod to oversee the affairs of the Church, (the larger bodies being coopted from the smaller) so likewise in the State there should be local, provincial and national authorities subject either directly or indirectly to local control.

Troeltsch, in his little volume, "Protestantism and Progress", notes this tendency. Recognising that subsequent Calvinism combined with its religious tenets a more radical conception of the theory of natural law, he maintains that there develops in Calvinism "a tendency toward progress, an impulse to reorganise governmental conditions when these were of an 'ungodly' character. Moreover, in these attempts at reorganisation themselves, there appears a specifically Reformed idea of the State (whose) germ cell

was the Reformed presbyterial and synodical church order, with its representative system." Eventually the Calvinistic conception adopted the idea of a State contract, and lent definite religious sanction to the whole by its doctrine of the covenants. "On these lines the Lex Naturae leads by the logic of events to a constitution and choice of authorities based on contract. These can then, as deriving their status from God as the 'causa remota', be regarded in a wholly religious aspect as God-appointed, and can lay claim to absolute obedience so long as they do not offend against the word of God."* Thus far, Troeltsch observes, there is a specifically Reformed idea of the State, which it is seen resembles modern representative democracy. Yet the essential spirit of Calvinism is aristocratic none the less, not democratic. However it is admitted that "Calvinism took a prominent part in preparing the way for the upgrowth of the democratic spirit."**

Troeltsch follows Jellinek in asserting that the idea of the rights of the individual is derived from the constitutions of the North American States, which in turn deduced them from Puritan religious principles. Yet their presence in this Anglo-American Puritanism Troeltsch is unwilling to refer to Calvinism chiefly or alone, but would call them the child of Anabaptist and spiritualistic, subjectivistic ideas in combination with certain Calvinistic principles, such as the "inviolability of the Divine Majesty" and the "presence of a pietistic Calvinism with a radical bent."***

* 114 ff.

** Ibid. 116 f.

*** Ibid. 121, 124.

The judgment is irrepressible that Troeltsch accords altogether too much weight to the Anabaptist influence, and altogether too little to the Reformed faith which furnished the religious basis of Puritanism. It is difficult to see how in political matters an Anabaptism still prominently characterised by its "a politei" could outweigh the influence of a virile Calvinism with its frank acceptance of civil obligations and interests, and its thirst for liberty.

In this connection it is interesting to note that Loofs, in an address before the Congress of German Historians in 1906, made such an energetic protest against Troeltsch's propensity to idealise Anabaptism and attribute to it such an exalted part in developing the modern age that Troeltsch admits that the criticisms are "to some extent justified,"* and tones down his remarks, especially omitting the assertion that the Anabaptism of the 17th century had abandoned its "a politei".

Surely we must agree with Troeltsch that "the democratising of the modern world ought not ... to be solely and directly referred to Calvinism,"** but that it also has its roots in the rationalism which appealed to natural law, and in the influence of ideas of religious liberty as advanced by the sects and Socinianism. But it is significant that even Troeltsch, whose tendency is to minimize all Reformation influences in the interest of his thesis that the modern age does not begin until a century and a half later, none the less admits the prominent part that Calvinism played in the development of the democratic spirit.

* "P. and P." 126 Note. Cp. Doumergue, "C. and Ref." pp. 19-24.

** "P. and P." 116.

It is true that Calvinism can accommodate itself to any form of civil government so long as its religious life remains unimpaired, but it is an inescapable fact of history that it finds itself most congenial to either^a modified or pure democracy. In itself Calvinism presents a remarkable combination of aristocracy and democracy, of individualism and communal responsibility, a political temper which is aristocratic without being monarchical, democratic without approaching the revolutionary. In view of the varied spheres in which this influence made itself felt - ecclesiastical polity, including a lay eldership, lay diaconate, parity of the clergy and Church discipline; aspects of doctrine, such as the "testimonium Spiritus Sancti," and election; political principles regarding submission and resistance, not to speak of a system of universal education and the democratising of Church music - one cannot escape the conclusion that primitive Calvinism was a seed-plot of democracy.*

One final caution, however; Calvin presents us with a fully developed doctrine of the sovereignty of God, but he has nothing to say of the sovereignty of the people except in so far as this is authority temporarily delegated to them by God. In fact he would have regarded the latter as derogatory to the sovereignty of God. Moreover, he has nothing to say about the natural rights of

* The Genevan Monument of the Reformation in vivid relief pictures the subsequent influence of Calvinism in the overthrow of autocracy and the establishment of the rights of the people in Switzerland, France, Holland, Hungary, Scotland, England and the New World. The Declaration of the Rights of Man, the Bill of Rights, ^{The Mayflower Compact,} and the Declaration of Independence, while undoubtedly having other sources as well, yet hark back to Geneva and Calvinism in a directly traceable manner. Historians of note freely admit the indebtedness of modern democracy to Calvin.

man. Calvin's principles were developed along such lines by his followers, particularly Beza. The glory of primitive Calvinism is not that it anticipated democracy, but that its spirit proved itself congenial, adaptable to democracy. That this was not Calvin's conscious aim does not detract from its worth nor from the credit which should be accorded him. * A system is not to be judged solely or chiefly by its tenets, but by its spirit, and its ability to adapt itself to changing conditions without surrendering any essential feature. Judged by such a standard primitive Calvinism not only proved itself congenial to a democratic régime but furnished its followers with guidance and inspiration in the establishment of representative democracy.

* As Leckie (243 f.) so justly remarks: "It would be a hard thing if no credit were given to men for the good which they unconsciously secure in the pursuance of the duties which they recognise."

CHAPTER VI

THE CHURCH AND THE MORAL SPHERE

Church Discipline

It will be remembered that in our discussion of the essence of the Church it was indicated that three contemporary conceptions of the Church struggle for expression and clarification in the teaching of Calvin. First, there is the ideal Church of the elect; secondly, the visible Church with its signs of word and sacraments, and finally the Church of sanctification. Speaking very roughly as regards the central point of emphasis only, one might call the first, the Augustinian Church of the elect (as such the common heritage of all the Reformers), the second, the Lutheran-Calvinistic Church as a visible fellowship of believers to be recognised by its two signs of word and sacraments, the third, the ideal Church of the sectaries, particularly the Anabaptists, a Church of the holy, that is, a Church in which only certified irreproachable Christians may have any part. Calvin combined this zeal for a holy life, so characteristic of the last named conception, with a strong ecclesiastical sense which rescued him from the excesses of Anabaptism. In fact in his case there existed a most happy combination of the three conceptions. For him the visible Church

existed not only to administer the sacraments and proclaim the true doctrine, but also to aid in the progressive sanctification of individual Christians and of the Christian community as a whole. In expression the accomplishment of this aim centered in the practise of discipline.

Logically it would have been more fitting to have discussed the practise of discipline in Chapter II in connection with the primary, distinctly spiritual mission of the Church as characterised by its three distinguishing marks of word, sacraments and discipline. Yet such would have been premature in view of the intimate relation existing between it and the unique Church-Republic of Geneva. It would be difficult to treat of discipline without a previous discussion of the Genevan background. Hence the postponement of the subject to the present connection.

It is well to consider first the external circumstances which made such an emphasis upon the moral sphere of key importance. Indeed the problem was implicit in the doctrinal changes brought about by the Reformation. It may justly be said that the supreme practical problem of the Reformation was how to guarantee moral character and good works if justification be gratuitous. If it be insistently preached to a generation which has placed all its trust in good works that after all these are not worth a single straw in obtaining justification or acceptance by God, it is little wonder that many should infer this as permission to rebound to an unbridled Libertinism. Unless there be a strong moral anchor to

give ballast to the preaching of justification by faith, an involuntary depreciation of good works is not only possible but probable. Protestantism was indeed at the cross-roads. What good were it to have escaped from the Scylla of Catholicism if it were only to fall helpless into the Charybdis of Libertinism? Just as in the early Church the preaching of justification by grace and not by works gave excuse to some of the Roman Christians to "sin that grace may abound", so at the Reformation it seemed to many that Protestantism had cut all the moorings of moral character and set Christians adrift in an uncharted and dangerous sea. Once remove the restraints that have curbed a generation's excesses, and in the necessary readjustment moral collapse is at hand. Subservience to the Roman hierarchy had been too largely based on fear. Remove this fear, and unless some other motive power be substituted, an uncontrolled license will sweep all before it.

Protestantism answered with Paul that good works are not the cause but the inevitable result of justification by faith. The Christian's debt to God is infinite and cannot conceivably be cancelled by any acts of man, however worthy. The impelling motive of character is not self-seeking, nor incessant striving to merit another's approval, but gratitude; the Christian works not toward but from his justification. However true this answer be, it did not at once by any means free Protestantism from suspicion.

In 1534 occurred the lamentable moral excesses of a minority of the Anabaptists at Münster. This deplorable incident, combining

as it did a species of anarchism with polygamy and moral disorder, enabled the Catholics to point the finger of scorn at the entire Protestant movement as completely subversive of the moral, social and political foundations of society. It afforded credence to libels against the character, aims and ambitions of the Reformers, and gave Catholic kings a plausible excuse with which to justify themselves in the eradication of troublesome Protestant minorities. It is little wonder that the Reformers made quick work to disassociate themselves and the Protestant movement from all connection with Anabaptism. In fact for centuries the entire Pietist and Anabaptist movements have been unjustly loaded with the reproaches due only to a hard-pressed fanatic minority. It is only within the past century that historians have been able to view the Anabaptist movement as a whole apart from the moral holocaust of Münster. Little wonder is it that in the heat of contemporary criticism the Reformers should accord scant justice to the Anabaptists who had brought the entire Reformation into disrepute, and should bend every nerve to strengthen the moral fibre of Protestantism, to insure the moral probity of the believer and the purity of the Church.

All of the slanders which in the first two centuries had been employed against the Christians were revived and applied to the Protestants. They were accused not only of anarchistic aims to overthrow all order and government, abolish all laws "and, in short, turn all things upside down," but also "among the common people are disseminated certain horrible insinuations - insinuations which,

if well founded, would justify the whole world in condemning the doctrine with its authors to a thousand fires and gibbets."*

Every Protestant was regarded as a potential Anabaptist and anarchist of the Münster stamp. In fact the calumnies and persecutions heaped upon the Huguenots under the excuse that they were dissolute and disloyal (the explanation tendered to allay German indignation) gave the immediate impulse to the penning of the Christian Institution. It was written not only in order to give an account of Protestant doctrine, but also to vindicate the martyred brethren, to justify the loyalty and moral probity of the movement and to disassociate it from all Anabaptist excesses. Little wonder is it that the first edition of the Institutes is so conspicuously concerned with moral and ethical questions; such was the crying need of the hour. The satisfactory answer which it gave to this need goes far toward explaining the immediate popularity of the book. Though in the first edition of the Institutes there is no specific mention of discipline itself as a mark of the true Church, Calvin's passion for holiness which lay at the basis of Church discipline is clearly revealed as one of its pre-dominating features.

An equally specific and more immediate problem confronted Calvin, namely, the lack of moral restraint in Geneva and the opposition of the Libertines. It has too often been the tendency for

* Inst. Vol. I, Prefatory Address, p.4, 25. Cp. Commentaries, "Psalms," Preface, xli.

Protestant critics to exaggerate and Catholic critics to minimize the moral degradation of pre-Calvinistic Geneva. As a matter of fact it was not the worst sink of iniquity on earth, yet its moral corruption was a disgrace to a city supposedly Christian and Reformed.* Demoralising drunkenness, prostitution and indecent dancing made the city an "Augean stable in desperate need of cleansing. Happily it had not long to wait for its Hercules."**

The pre-Calvinistic Reformation in Geneva had been negative rather than positive, political rather than religious, external rather than internal, lip service rather than a change of heart, characterised by a love of freedom rather than zeal for the Gospel, by a hatred of the priesthood rather than love to God. Probably the most illuminating contemporary account of conditions is that given by Bonnivard, a prominent Genevan citizen and patriot, in an address to his fellow citizens before the arrival of Calvin: "How can you reform the church, you who are yourselves so unreformed? You say, the monks and priests are unchaste, gamblers, drunkards; but you are the same. You wish to expel the Popish clergy, and to put the preachers of the Gospel in their place. That in itself will be good, but it will be bad for you, who find all your comfort in forbidden pleasures. The preachers will establish a reformation which will subject vice to its merited punishment. You have hated the priests, who are too much like yourselves;

* Kampschulte, a Catholic critic, ("Johann Calvin," Vol.I, p.206f. quoted Foster, 230) admits that "facts suggest a considerable though not surprising amount of dissoluteness and vice." Henry, I, 99, 323 paints Genevan degradation in the most lurid colours, cp. Reyburn, 335-343, for a more dispassionate and accurate account.

** Reyburn, 337 f.

you will hate the preachers, because they are not like you. Not two years will have passed away before you will wish they were priests, and will pay them their wages with a heavy cudgelling. Men are willing enough that justice should be exercised against others, but not against themselves. Love for freedom has degenerated into the love of licentiousness. Most people imagine that reformation consists altogether in doing away with masses, monasteries, and saint-days."*

Bonnivard's characterisation of his fellow citizens enables us to visualise the conditions which attended the emergence of the party of the Libertines. They had supported the Reformation in order to loose themselves from the tyranny of the priestcraft, not in order to subject themselves to moral restraints becoming a Christian, much less to meekly submit to the hard yoke of Calvinistic Church discipline. Political and sensual rather than religious motives had actuated them. There seem, however, to have been two main strands of thought in the Libertine party, political and "spiritual," in frequent but not necessary union.** Among the former were numbered some of the leading patricians of Geneva. They had longed for political freedom from the despotic domination of Savoy and had embraced the Reformation simply to afford a means to that end. A Geneva under the thumb of a puritanical consistory was as distasteful to them as the tyranny of absolute despotism or the hierarchical clergy. Calvin eventually overcame

* Henry, I, 98 f.

** Cp. Henry, II, 41-69.

the opposition of this party by the wholesale enrollment of several thousand refugees as citizens. Most of the latter were religious exiles and hence zealous for his theocratic ideal. We can well imagine how galling this yoke would be to the burghers of Geneva, and can sympathise with them in their bitter opposition to the alien upstarts. Yet we should recognise that Geneva owes her undying fame in large measure to this infiltration of alien life which so indelibly stamped its seal upon the city's subsequent history.

The "spiritual" Libertines were of an entirely different stamp and cannot but merit unhesitating contempt. Their opposition to Calvin was ostensibly based on doctrinal but in reality on moral grounds. They taught a sensualistic pantheism which trampled morality in the dust. They interpreted the Bible in an allegorical fashion. Denying the freedom of the will they maintained that there is but one all powerful Spirit in the universe, who wills all things. Sin and moral responsibility are illusions. Christian freedom thus leads to gross licentiousness. In short it was a philosophically grounded, mystical, anti-Christian, sensual pantheism. Such doctrine and life could not but evoke from Calvin a vigorous and unrelenting enmity, much more uncompromising than his opposition to Catholicism. Their doctrinal and, (which is significant), equally their moral looseness was utterly reprehensible in Calvin's eyes and served to crystallise his own passion for holiness and the establishment of Church discipline to guarantee the same.

To assert that the predominant note of the first edition of the Institutes is its emphasis on the practical, spiritual and ethical life is not to deny that a detailed doctrinal system is at its basis. To sever doctrine and life is fatal. But the danger of Calvin's day was that the new Protestantism should intellectualise doctrine and fail to perceive that doctrine alone is insufficient, that Christian faith, though doctrinally grounded, must find expression in Christian living. "Doctrine is not an affair of the tongue, but of the life; is not apprehended by the intellect and memory merely, like other branches of learning; but is received only when it possesses the whole soul, and finds its seat and habitation in the inmost recesses of the heart To doctrine in which our religion is contained we have given the first place, since by it our salvation commences; but it must be transfused into the breast, and pass into the conduct, and so transform us into itself, as not to prove unfruitful." Mere lip profession is unworthy, for the Gospel "ought to penetrate the inmost affections of the heart, fix its seat in the soul, and pervade the whole man."*

* Inst. III, VI, 4. Chapters 6-10 of Book III reveal a Calvin who is intensely interested in the everyday life of the Christian man. It is noteworthy that in this book which deals primarily with the mode of obtaining the grace of Christ, with its discussion of such subjects as adoption, faith, justification and election, the central doctrines of the faith, out of the twenty-five chapters of this specifically doctrinal book no less than six deal solely with the practical moral and ethical life of the Christian. Little wonder that Beza says of his revered master, that his sole object was "to show that the Gospel which he preached did not consist in mere speculation but in Christian practise." Tracts, Vol. I, 1. "Let your whole life correspond to your profession." Letters, III, 70.

An ethical passion of remarkable intensity is revealed in the Institutes and Commentaries, as well as in Calvin's Letters and sermons. It is a common error to picture Calvin as a remorseless, morose, irascible logician and dialectician, an intellectualist with little concern for the practical life of the Christian. Logical and intellectual he undoubtedly was, but this was not his primary concern. He did not spend his life in grim satisfaction "unravelling the horrible decree." He had no patience with speculation per se. Glance for a moment at the following quotation from his letter to Laelius Socinus and contrast his practical attitude with that of the speculative and metaphysical founder of Socinianism: "Certainly no one can be more averse to paradox than I am, and in subtleties I find no delight at all If you are gratified by floating among those aerial speculations, permit me, I beseech you, an humble disciple of Christ, to meditate on those things which tend toward the building up of my faith."*

In his Commentaries it is the practical application of truth which preeminently concerns him, and which is one of the most potent reasons why his expositions, after nearly four centuries, still remain a standard work on the shelves of Biblical scholars and preachers.** Likewise Calvin's sermons were eminently prac-

* Letters, III, 315 f.

** After a careful study of the Commentaries A. M. Hunter tenders the following judgment:(for Calvin) "The Scripture is meant for doctrine and for life, but whatever be the doctrine that he finds, he turns it round to show the side with which it touches life. Not merely to instruct but to edify, not to gain a scholar's victory but to defeat a pernicious error, not merely to plumb the

tical, even simple, for he never lost sight of their application to daily life. The prayers for public worship adopted under his auspices reveal an embracing interest in all the activities of life. Disgust at all sham and hypocrisy, at ceremonial and ritual which blinds itself to character, charity and true worship, these are notes frequently struck with resounding force in his Tracts (See esp. Vol. I, "Inventory of Relics").

It is a common practise to characterise the Lutheran faith as soulful (*gemütlich*), the Reformed as intellectual; but even admitting this as a general tendency we must remember that Lutheranism witnessed the greater development of scholastic theology, and that Calvinism began and remained preeminently practical. It is said that Calvin intellectualised religion, a criticism not wholly unfounded though misleading. In the sense that he brought a trained mind to the discussion of every problem of theology or religion this is eminently true; but that he deliberately in his Institutes, much less in his life, reduced God to a mathematically rigid formula or blinded himself to the heart is simply to make a travesty of fact. Granted he did not emphasise the love of God in Scriptural proportions, the sermons, Commentaries and especially Letters none the less reveal him as a preacher of the full mercy of God.

depth of a divine thought but to lift the aspiring soul on the height of it a little nearer God, - that is Calvin's aim, and that, in wonderful degree, is his achievement." (Page 33.)

Normally the above criticism is levelled at the Institutes only, not at the life of Calvin, for as applied to the latter such a criticism is puerile. Not that we find Calvin a good-humoured, genial Luther, but the Letters do reveal a man! There is many a glint of humour in the Institutes. True, it is often more like biting sarcasm, but the cause so merits one's approval that one cannot restrain a smile.* We know that the Reformer himself greatly appreciated a good joke.** Also there are not wanting expression which reveal him as an open, frank, affectionate, even tender (though not demonstrative) friend, and for any open-minded critic expel once and for all the dictum that he was a cold, stoical intellectualist out of touch with the ills, sorrows, friendships and joys of this life.*** That the all-round aspect of Calvin's life was noted even in his day is evidenced by the comment of Beza, who records the grief of Geneva at the death of the Reformer: "the whole State regretting its wisest citizen, the Church the departure of its faithful pastor, the Academy grieving at being deprived of so great a teacher, all lamenting the loss of one who was, under God, a common parent and comforter."****

* Viz., Inst. IV, XI, 2, in which connection, in criticism of the Roman exegesis of Matthew, xviii. 17, 18, regarding binding and loosing on earth and in heaven, he remarks cryptically: "So well known are the keys to those who have thought proper to fit them with locks and doors, that you would say their whole life had been spent in the mechanic art." Note also his pointed query (IV, X, 31) "Is religion placed in a woman's bonnet, so that it is unlawful for her to go out with her head uncovered?"

** Letters, I, 295.

*** Ibid. I, 222-229; IV, 120, 364. On the general subject of Calvin the man see Lang, "R. und G." Ch's 1-5; A. M. Hunter, Ch. XV, Warfield, 383-390.

**** Tracts, I, xcvi.

Not one of the Reformers laid such insistent emphasis upon sanctification. In fact Calvin fully equalled the zeal of the sects in this regard, though his underlying conception of the process was different. To the Lutheran sanctification implied the qualitative perfection of justification, to the sects it involved perfection in the absolute sense, while to Calvin, though sanctification was technically included in the decree of God, its realisation was dependent upon an insistent struggle on the part of the believer. It involved continuous development toward perfection, though the latter is not fully obtainable in this life.* The dogma of absolute perfection was the shibboleth of those who desired by this to cloak all manner of impiety and vice, notably the Libertines and a few of the more extreme Anabaptists. Calvin was a thorough agnostic as to the perfection of either individual or Church during the course of this life, yet he gave place to no one in his zeal for progress toward such perfection. It is to be the constant goal before the eye of the believer. Yet he should not be discouraged if the way seem difficult and long. "In this earthly prison of the body, no man is supplied with strength sufficient to hasten in his course with due alacrity. While the greater number are so oppressed with weakness, that hesitating, and halting, and even crawling on the ground, they make little progress, let everyone of us go as far as his humble ability enables him, and prosecute the journey once begun. No one will travel so badly as not daily to make some degree of progress How little soever the success may correspond with our wish, our labour is not

* Inst. IV. 1, 20; III. xvii, 15.

lost when to-day is better than yesterday If during the whole course of life we seek and follow, we shall at length attain it, when relieved from the infirmity of flesh we are admitted to the full presence of God."* With such a tender, understanding patience will Calvin cheer the believer on his thorny path to a peerless goal. He possessed a well-balanced grasp of a doctrine which if baldly stated might serve the wicked with a cloak for his sin or on the other hand prove a source of the most heartrending discouragement to the sincere believer. In this, as in so much else, Calvin steered a carefully chosen via media.

The query naturally rises: is not sanctification purely a personal, individual matter? Granted that holiness of life should characterise the believer, what relation does this bear to the mission of the Church? The individualism of election, justification, and sanctification is of course an integral part of Reformed theology. Yet it is equally true that the Church has a specific duty in the progressive sanctification of the individuals which compose it and by implication also the society in which it is

* Ibid. III, vi, 5. Professor Herman Bavinck of Amsterdam thus characterises the conception of faith as held by the three Reformers: "While Luther's faith was almost entirely absorbed in the fides justificans, and while Zwingli one-sidedly defined faith as fides vivificans or regenerans, Calvin widened the conception to that of fides salvificans, - a faith which renews the entire man in his being and consciousness, in soul and body, in all his relations and activities, and hence a faith which exercises its sanctifying influence in the entire range of life, upon Church and school, upon society and State, upon science and arts." (Bavinck in "C. and R." - p. 112.) As a statement of general tendencies rather than of mutually exclusive conceptions this judgment is surely a sound one.

placed. All the Reformers agreed that the Church is primarily the bearer of the word of God and the sacraments, means of grace through which the Spirit evokes and confirms faith in individuals. But Calvin was not satisfied with this alone. While the offering of the means of grace is a task inherent in the very nature of the Church, for Calvin the Church also possesses the additional task of furthering the sanctification of its members. In fact if one be interested in noting what is peculiar to Calvin, the conception of this as an integral part of the mission of the Church may be called one of his most distinctive and far-reaching contributions. In this he combines the Anabaptist emphasis on sanctification with a well-defined ecclesiastical sense utterly lacking among the sects.

Rieker argues that since in the Reformed theology ~~the~~ salvation is dependent on the decree of God, the conception of the Church as an institution for the salvation of men loses its force. The offering of the means of grace is thus not so central as in Lutheranism, because all is dependent on the secret decree of God. Hence the cardinal task of the Church becomes rather the sanctification of its members. Calvin's ideal is to develop a Church in which the headship of Christ is fully recognised. The Church thus ceases to be an institution for the salvation of men and becomes an institution for their sanctification. One cannot but take sharp issue with Rieker on his statement as to the reasons for Calvin's emphasis upon the Church's task in the sanctification of its members. He overlooks the fact that though the believer's salvation

is dependent on God's secret decree, the means by which the salvation is to be appropriated are likewise included in this decree. These means are the word and sacraments as empowered by the Spirit and presented by the Church. It cannot be emphasised too strongly that the Church does not lose one whit of its importance under this conception. It remains as vital an agency as heretofore, or as in the case of Lutheranism. Also Rieker overemphasises the institutional character of the Church, for the conception of the Church as a fellowship of believers does not pass away. The sources of Calvin's insistence on sanctification as a task of the Church are rather to be sought in his conception of the headship of Christ, in his own rigorous insistence on holiness, and in the external circumstances which made such an emphasis imperative.

A passion for holiness burns within Calvin as fervently as in any Anabaptist, but his reverence and love for the Church will not permit him to be privy to a policy of separation from the Church on the ground that it does not exhibit perfection. This is not for a moment to imply that one is submissively to concur in the evil which stains the Church; one should seek to remove such blots on Christ's name, but never leave any Church so long as it retains the marks of the true Church (the word and sacraments).

It thus becomes important to ascertain the means which the Church is to employ in the progressive sanctification of its members. The preaching of the Evangel will naturally occupy a central

place. Luther was content to stop with this and to trust the entire future development of Christian character to the Spirit of God dwelling within the individual. The Christian was thus made immediately responsible to Christ alone. Such a system was predominantly idealistic in tone, and in accord with Luther's conviction of the liberty of the Christian man. As such his attitude more nearly accords with modern Christianity which deprecates the use of discipline, preferring to trust to the Christian conscience as informed by the preaching of the word and empowered by the indwelling Spirit. It is to be remembered also that Luther, unlike Calvin, possessed no special genius for administration. Moreover, in his mind Church discipline smacked of Roman tyranny. Preach the word and all else will flow naturally from such a pure, life-giving source. Coupled as this conception was with Luther's conservatism and his negative attitude toward the State, it was natural that in Germany with the passage of time the practise of discipline should practically cease, or come under the control of the State.*

Now it may be well and good to leave the development of Christian character to the Divine Spirit within. Yet as a matter of bitter experience the Church had learned that not all who profess to be of the Lord's flock are in reality willing to listen to the Spirit. The Church dare not allow open sin to flourish unrebuked among its members. To do so is to endanger others and to cast a blight on God's name. Moreover, to allow worldly-minded civil

* Cp. Tr. "Hibbert Journal," 110 f. and Rieker, 181.

authorities to take over this responsibility is to open the door wide for all sorts of abuses. The early Church found it necessary to practise discipline in order to restrain those who openly impugned the Evangel by their conduct. Calvin had the example of history as well as practical necessity on his side. The idealism of Luther was thoroughly commendable, but not of a sufficiently virile stamp to develop the sturdy Christian ethic necessary to save Western Europe when assailed by disintegration within and the Counter Reformation without.*

It was not so much that Calvin distrusted Christian liberty per se; he was not one whit behind Luther in emphasising such spiritual sanctions for the development of Christian character and progressive sanctification. But he saw what Luther's idealism did not enable him to grasp, that the age demanded some more tangible method if the character of the Reformed Church was to be steeled against deterioration into Libertinism, and especially if it were to possess sufficient stamina to stand firm against the onslaughts of a reviving Catholicism. The latter danger was much more acute at the time of Calvin, who it should be remembered was a second generation Reformer. Moreover, inasmuch as he was actuated by a stronger Biblicism than Luther he was enabled to emphasise Scripture in the guise of a new law to be taken as the

* Seeberg makes the interesting observation that the contrast between the inner freedom of the spirit of Lutheranism and the legal, external ordinances of Calvinism is a reflection of the national differences between Luther the German and Calvin the Frenchman. (629). But surely tendencies are not to be so easily catalogued. In any case with Calvin it is not a question of either ... or.

explicit expression of the divine will for all spheres of life. Not only doctrine and moral principles are there discoverable, but also an ecclesiastical polity as well. The germ of legalism lies latent in such a conception, but in its ability to meet the needs of the hour it was well-nigh indispensable.

While sharing Luther's valuation of the more inward sanctions for the development of Christian character, Calvin did not share the other's suspicion of outward means. With his genius for administration, with his clearer conception of the relation of Church and State, and keen appreciation of the crucial situation which demanded the development of a virile Christian community, he gave to the practise of discipline a leading place in his polity. Though in form the practise be external and objective rather than inward and spiritual, legalistic rather than idealistic, it was Church discipline which played a most prominent role in developing the sturdy Calvinistic piety. Without its support it is doubtful if Protestantism would have survived in Western Europe. The establishment of a consistory with its powers of censure, admonition and excommunication, united with the preaching of the word in developing a remarkably well-informed body of public opinion which focussed itself upon the task of aiding the progressive sanctification of the believer, and which also projected itself into the wider circle of the community and resulted in toning up the moral and social level of the entire State.

It is now our purpose to sketch the theory and practise of discipline as planned and carried out by Calvin. In spite of the

fact that the relation between theory and practise is complex one cannot entirely ignore the subject, because in the conception of the mission of the Church discipline takes a key position as the organ through which the Church assumes an expanding interest in social, ethical and other phases of life even farther afield.

".... the principal part of ecclesiastical power consists in jurisdiction. Now, the whole jurisdiction of the Church relates to discipline" As civil government is necessary for the existence of a village or city, equally essential, yet distinct from it, there should exist a spiritual government in the Church of God. To this end "there were established in the Church from the first, tribunals which might take cognizance of morals, animadvert on vices, and exercise the office of the keys." This is in accord with the direct word of Christ granting the power of binding and loosing to His Church. The admonitions and corrections of which He speaks cannot be carried into effect except after due investigation, and "hence the necessity of some judicial procedure and order." The power of government wielded among the Jews by the Sanhedrin has been transferred to the Church .

By the expression "binding and loosing" Christ had two things in view; first (Mt. xvi, 19 and John xx, 23) the ministry of the word through which sinners should be freed by the redemption of Christ. In this sense binding and loosing means naught else than the proclamation of the Gospel and is "not so much power as ministry." "Christ ... testified that in the preaching of the Gospel

the apostles only acted ministerially; that it was He who, by their mouths as organs, spoke and promised all; that, therefore, the forgiveness of sins which they announced was the true promise of God; the condemnation which they pronounced, the certain judgment of God." The second use of the phrase "binding and loosing" (Mt. xviii, 17, 18) refers however to a practise much more specific, "to the discipline of excommunication which has been committed to the Church." Thus Calvin apparently grounds discipline on the same firm basis of divine sanction as the preaching of the word. "The Lord testifies that such judgment of the faithful is nothing else than the promulgation of His own sentence and that what they do on earth is ratified in heaven." But will not this reestablish a hierarchical tyranny? No; "they cannot err ... because they judge only according to the law of God, which is not an uncertain or worldly opinion, but the holy will of God, an oracle of heaven." The rule of the Book will replace the rule of the Church.*

By the keys of the Church then is meant the ministry of the word and Church discipline, both alike being the proclamation of God's will as contained in Scripture. As the doctrine of Christ is the "life of the Church" so discipline is "its sinews If no society, nay, no house with even a moderate family, can be kept in a right state without discipline, much more necessary is it in the Church, whose state ought to be the best ordered possible." To preaching must be added "private admonition, correction,

* Foregoing quotations from Inst. IV, xi, 1, 2 and xii, 4.

and similar methods of maintaining doctrine and not allowing it to become lethargic."* "As doctrine is the soul of the Church for quickening, so discipline and the correction of vices are like the nerves to sustain the body in a state of health and vigour."**

It is quite apparent that Calvin did not regard the preaching of the word alone as of sufficient force to guarantee a pure Church and the development of Christian character. In fact this conviction was the focal point of his many struggles in Geneva. The proud Genevan burghers were willing enough to accept the Reformers as preachers, but not as pastors.*** They were willing enough to give intellectual assent to the new doctrine provided their conduct be not interfered with. Disagreement over Church ceremonies was only incident to the deeper enmity of the Council and people to Church discipline, whose threatened enforcement directly resulted in the exile of Calvin and Farel in 1538. That Calvin had rightly diagnosed the disease which was afflicting the city is clearly indicated by the fact that immediately following his exile "troops of bacchanals paraded the streets by night, singing riotous songs, and threatening to cast the preachers into the Rhone."****

* Ibid. IV, xii, 1.

** Letters II, 183.

*** Letters I, 42.

**** Henry, I, 134.

Nor can this aversion to discipline be explained on the ground that the preaching of the word was not carried out with sufficient zeal. No single leader of the Reformation possessed a firmer grasp of Scriptural truth than Calvin, and no one was more particular than he about applying the doctrine to practical living. What burdens would have been spared him had he contented himself with this alone, but such a course he could but view as a dereliction of duty.* His exile only served to confirm him in his conviction that preaching alone is insufficient. The prime consideration in his mind regarding a return to Geneva was the establishment of the spiritual government of the Church.** This is evident from a letter written to Farel just three days after his return from exile (1541) : "Immediately after I had offered my services to the Senate, I declared that a Church could not hold together unless a settled government should be agreed upon, such as is prescribed to us in the word of God, and such as was in use in the ancient Church."*** At his request six senators were at once chosen to confer with the ministers to consider the question of discipline and to draw up an ecclesiastical polity. The result of their labours was embodied in the Ecclesiastical Ordinances finally adopted two months later. For the following fourteen years the subject of discipline was a chief point of

* In the preface to his catechism published in Basel, 1538, he cautions ministers of the word, saying: "Our duty is not finished when we have preached the word. We must employ a far greater degree of diligence in the care of those whose blood will be required at our hands if they perish through our negligence." Quoted Henry I, 126.

** Letters, I, 209.

*** Letters, I, 260. Cp. IV, 418, where in referring to discipline

emphasis, until the right of excommunication was finally confirmed to the Church in 1555.

The tenor of the foregoing expressions undoubtedly indicates that Calvin regarded discipline as possessing divine sanction.* In fact in the case of one whose mind was so Biblically grounded as his a Scriptural basis must be discernible else the practise abandoned. It does not surprise us then to hear him refer to discipline as the "yoke of Christ", "clearly the doctrine of Christ",** or to have him say that, since Biblically founded, decisions of a Church consistory "cannot err;"*** nor in the 1539 Protocol over the proceedings in Strassburg with Caroly, which was subscribed to by both Calvin and Bucer, to find discipline added to word and sacraments as a third mark of the true Church.**** In the 1539 edition of the Institutes, likewise, discipline is placed alongside word and sacraments, and this has since been the normal procedure in the Reformed Church.

Calvin says: "For it is better to suffer a hundred deaths than to swerve a hair's breadth from the straight line."

* Cp. Tulloch, 121 f.

** Letters II, 426.

*** Inst. IV, xi, 2.

**** Werd. 295, 302, 303. See also Tracts I, 38, where the triad is regarded as that on which the safety of the Church is founded.

Yet for all that the facts compel us to maintain that Calvin did not place discipline in as pivotal a position as the other two signs. Word and sacraments he regarded as the *sine qua non* of the true Church. He often speaks of them alone as the pledge and earnest of the Church's very existence, yet makes no reference to discipline in such a connection. Pure doctrine there must be, but not necessarily a perfect system of discipline. If the latter be lacking the Church is endangered but will not necessarily fail. He expressly cautions individual Christians and pastors against abandoning the communion of a Church in which the word is preached and sacraments administered according to Christ's ordinance though such a Church be teeming with faults, even immorality and vice. The fact that discipline is not carried out in a Church is no valid excuse for schism.* Moreover, Calvin did not regard the absence of a true Church discipline as an unconditional hindrance to Church unity (vs. Pighius, v. Werd. 318) for he would gladly have welcomed union with Lutheranism and the German Swiss, even when there was no true discipline as he understood the term. He was far more tolerant of a mediocre and imperfect discipline than it is conceivable he could ever have been of a like failure in the preaching of the word. He regarded discipline as part of the divine plan, and its establishment as incumbent upon all churches, yet never emphasised it to the extent that it even equalled in importance, let alone overshadowed the other two marks.

* Inst. IV, I, 9-19.

As there are differences in the degree of iniquity, so there must be also in the exercise of discipline. In the case of more secret and private faults private admonition should be given by Christians to one another. More especially is this the duty of pastors and presbyters, who should not only teach the people but exhort and admonish from house to house. "Then does doctrine obtain force and authority, not only when the minister publicly expounds to all what they owe to Christ, but has the right and means of exacting this from those whom he may observe to be sluggish or disobedient to his doctrine."* Following the order indicated by Christ (Matthew xviii, 15, 17), if after two admonitions the erring brother does not mend his conduct, he is summoned before the consistory of elders and there admonished, or if necessary banned. However, in the case of such private offenses "a gentle and fatherly verbal chastisement" leading to repentance is quite sufficient.** Other iniquities, being of a more flagrant public nature, are an offense to the entire Church and as such are to be handled by the Consistory (I Tim. v. 20). Not only admonition and rebuke may be necessary but also denial of the privilege of communion, until such time as the offender repents.*** Excommunication does not ipso facto consign men to eternal punishment, only assuring offenders that unless repentance ensues such a fate will await them. Anathema, on the other hand, completely excludes any hope of pardon, and as such is "rarely if ever to be used."****

* Inst. IV, xii, 2.

** Ibid. Sec. 6.

*** Ibid. Sec. 6.

**** Ibid. Sec. 10.

In the imposition of punishment the Church is to act in the spirit of meekness, to use moderation and humanity, and to be careful lest it exhibit too much rigour, and thus defeat the very purpose of discipline, the repentance of the offender. The excessive austerity of the ancients he characterises as "altogether at variance with the injunction of our Lord, and strangely perilous."* The supposedly austere rigourist Calvin is again revealed in the role of a pleader for moderate measures. He argues that to maintain that a second lapse in conduct should forever preclude a second repentance is decidedly unreasonable, leading the offender to hypocrisy or utter despair. He is especially critical of the Anabaptist teaching that regeneration implies perfection, hence that a single lapse results in final exclusion. Such doctrines Calvin justly condemns as falsehood, utterly foreign to the injunctions and example of Scripture.**

Moreover, another restraint is cast about the exercise of discipline by the frank admission that the power of binding and loosing does not give the Church the ability to distinguish with certainty the elect from the reprobate.*** Keep professing Christians from flagrantly outraging the Gospel by their conduct, it must; yet it dare not pry into God's secret counsel. Hence excommunication does not necessarily imply reprobation. It does

* Ibid. Sec. 8. ., Cp. 9 and 10. On the occasion of the establishment of discipline by Calvin in the Strassburg Church, he remarks in a letter to Farel: "... I see that some allowance must be made for the folly of mankind; nor ought the rigour of discipline be stretched so far that they may not play the fool on some occasion." Letters, I, 146.

** Inst. IV, I, 23. Cp. xii, 12.

*** Inst. IV, I, 8.

mark men as aliens from the Church and from Christ until such time as they repent; but in doing so it "merely estimates the character of each man's acts according to the law of the Lord."* The Church will not cease to hope and pray for them, and it will acknowledge that the final judgment is God's alone. On the other hand excommunication is the means by which the truly elect may be appraised of their sin and moved to repentance, being thus a coordinate ally of the preaching of the word. Naturally excommunication from the Roman Church need not disturb the Christian, inasmuch as that communion does not possess the two marks of the true Church.** As to the common discipline of fastings, prayer and other holy exercises, though strictly speaking these are not a part of the power of the keys, they may yet if properly controlled be of assistance to the Christian.***

Quoting Augustine Calvin commends special moderation and mercy when the "contagion of sin has seized the multitude."**** Nor "must the rigour of discipline be stretched so far as to overwhelm with grief the individual for whose benefit it should specially be designed (II Cor. ii, 7).***** Extreme harshness is indefensible. "There is danger, lest instead of discipline we fall

* Inst. IV, xii, 9.

** Commentaries, "John," ix, 22.

*** Inst. IV, xii, 14-21.

**** Ibid. Sec. 13.

***** Ibid. IV, I, 29.

into a kind of gehenna, and instead of correctors become executioners."* All of which serves to indicate that Calvin will not permit his passion for holiness to lead him to demand absolute perfection. He certainly was possessed of an accumulative weight of evidence from Scripture, history and common sense in his denunciation of the ultra-puritanical sects. However, it must be admitted that the moderation he so consistently extolled in theory was only his usual, not his universal practise.

As to the end for which the practise of discipline exists Calvin names three considerations: first, that the honour of God be not insulted by the name of Christians being given to evil men, or by the Lord's Supper being "profaned by promiscuous admission;" second, that the good be not corrupted by the bad example presented them if in constant communication with the wicked; and third, that the sinner be ashamed and repent.** It is important to note that the honour of God is given such prominence. This is characteristic of Calvin's constant insistence on the promotion of God's glory as the chief end of man. Bucer had already indicated the two latter reasons for the use of excommunication, and it is significant that Calvin should not only add a third, but put it as he does in the foremost place.*** This tends to confirm the con-

* Ibid. IV, xii, 10, Note.

** Inst. IV, xii, 5.

*** Cp. Werd. 283 f. In the Letters there are countless instances in which a like emphasis is accorded the glory of God; e.g., in a letter to the Protector Somerset in regard to the establishment of discipline in England, Calvin exclaims: "He proclaims aloud, how precious His name is unto Him. Meanwhile, it is as if torn in pieces and trampled under foot. It can never be that He will allow such shameful reproach to remain unpunished." Letters, II, 182.

viction that although Calvin built much on foundations laid by others, particularly Luther and Bucer, all of his teaching is nevertheless suffused by his own distinct type of piety whose most fundamental note is its emphasis upon the glory and honour of the sovereign God.

In Calvin's mind discipline is a curb to restrain the evil, a stimulus to arouse the indifferent, a fatherly rod with which to correct the erring and patiently lead them back to the fold. It serves to maintain sound doctrine, and to promote the order, peace and unity of the Church.* In fact the express object of the practise of discipline is not only to remove scandals but to prevent their occurrence. By the exercise of discipline the minister will "assist the magistrate in diminishing the number of offenders."** Its aim is educative as well as punitive; it seeks to deter men from crime and to lead them to repentance rather than merely to punish them. We should rid our minds of the fallacy that discipline is necessarily objective and legalistic, or Roman in its austerity. Such was by no means the case. Moderation was enjoined, and considering the times, in a remarkable proportion of cases practised, and the end of discipline constantly borne in mind, that the sinner of his own free will repent and return to his God. Both in conscious intent and practise discipline proved of untold value in educating and developing the type of Christian character whose breach it was designed to punish. It became the partner of the preaching of the word in

* Inst. IV, xii, 1, 4; xi, 5.

** Ibid. xi, 3.

aiding and insuring the progressive sanctification of believers and of the Christian community.

That such worthy ends be attained, what body is to be entrusted with the exercise of discipline? A firm grasp of Calvin's answer to this question is of basic importance in the understanding of his theory and even more in an appraisal of its merit. Catholicism had exercised the power through its hierarchical clergy, issuing in a perilous domination of Church over State. Moreover, such discipline was all too often motivated by political considerations of position and power with a consequent lack of emphasis on the moral integrity of either laity or clergy. Such a system bore almost no resemblance to the purity of primitive Church discipline, and was alike the cause of despair to earnest Catholics and scorn to the more puritanical Reformers. For these as well as doctrinal reasons it was natural, therefore, and commendable, that Lutheranism left the development of moral behaviour to spiritual restraints, primarily the conscience of the Christian man as informed by the preaching of the word and the indwelling of God's Spirit. This marks a distinct advance. However, this was coupled with such a distrust of the entire practise of discipline as savouring of Catholic domination, that Lutheranism swung to the opposite extreme of minimizing discipline almost to the vanishing point.

The German Swiss Reformers, notably Zwingli and Bullinger, recognised that in primitive days the Church had itself exercised

discipline, but attributed this to the fact that then there existed no Christian rulers to whom the Church could entrust this office. They maintained that when the magistrates are Christians, as was ostensibly the case in Switzerland, the duty of exercising discipline should be committed to them. There was a wide spread tendency in Switzerland to soft pedal discipline. In Zurich, Bern and Lausanne excommunication became a prerogative of the magistracy, materially aiding in the establishment of almost complete control over the Church, even in doctrinal matters. Caeseropapacy displaced the discredited Papacy.

Against such a conception Calvin protested with all the zeal of one who believes he is fighting the battle of the Lord. The scheming Libertines sought to cloak their lusts by an appeal to the magistracy to conserve its God-given authority of discipline and not yield it to the Church, a specious argument to which the patricians and councillors were only too willing to accede. Some of the ministers also, while publicly assenting to the exercise of excommunication by the Church, privately exhorted the senators not to surrender their authority. Add to this the example of the Lutheran and pressure of the other Swiss churches, and it is small wonder that the Genevan magistrates bestirred themselves. Calvin's answer to all such was the clarion call that the Church must "fight manfully, with a stout heart and unwearied zeal, for that sacred authority and power of spiritual jurisdiction over the members of the Church which ought ever to be held inviolable."*

*Letters, I, 293.

The plausible argument that spiritual jurisdiction was only intended to be a temporary prerogative of the primitive Church because of the lack of Christian magistrates he characterises as "frigid." It is to overlook the fundamental dissimilarity of the ecclesiastical and civil powers.* The former has no power of the sword, to coerce or restrain, and its purpose is not punishment but the repentance of the sinner. Besides, as a practical matter, magistrates are often negligent; they would wink at the worst disorders and sometimes they themselves need to undergo such discipline. It is not fitting that the judge and the accused should be one and the same person. Moreover, the same logic might with equal force be applied to the entire ministry of the word; yet no one would think of according this office to the State. The contention that Moses and David are examples of civil officers exercising such spiritual jurisdiction is quite beside the point, he contends, for they possessed not only singular qualifications but were directly appointed by God to serve in both spheres, purely as a temporary measure pending the establishment of the priesthood and Church on a firm basis.

Scripture and the example of early Christianity, as well as the condition of the contemporary Church, furnished Calvin with a powerful lever in his fight against such tremendous odds. However, the potent and more fundamental reason why he insisted on the retention by the Church of the power of discipline lay in his horror at the very thought of any practise derogatory to the sole

* Inst. IV, xi, 3, 4.

headship of Christ. To allow the State to arrogate to itself the spiritual office of Church discipline were to displace Christ's headship by human authority, to outrage the name of God. There is a wide difference between human authority directly commissioned by the Church itself for the task of discipline, and the political, self-appointed magistrate as an arbiter in matters of moral integrity and conduct affecting the good name of the Church and the honour of God. The former practise is that of a delegated authority consonant with the headship of Christ; the latter is destructive of that headship, for it introduces a foreign power into the spiritual tasks of the Church. As such it unduly exalts human authority in spiritual matters, and anything which even in the remotest degree smacks of the deification of the creature, Calvin will have none of.

That this consideration was basic in Calvin's thought is made clear in a letter to the pastors of the Church of Zurich. It was written at the height of the controversy over the proposed readmission of Berthelier to the Lord's Supper by act of the Council in spite of his excommunication by the Consistory of the Genevan Church. On the 3rd of November, 1553, the Council ruled that in future all cases dealing with bans from the Lord's Supper and readmission to the same must be referred to it. Such a decision meant to grant victory to the Libertines and involved the complete abdication of the Consistory in favour of the Council. Naturally this could elicit from Calvin but one response, and he wrote with some asperity: "I consider that it would be perfidious cowardice

in me, so long as I occupy my present position, not to contend keenly, even to the utmost, in behalf of a holy and lawful discipline. I have resolved that I should a hundred times rather leave this life - not to say this place - than suffer to be overthrown, that which I am confident is taken from the word of God we must not yield them this victory; nay, we must not knowingly and wilfully surrender the entire liberty of the Church; not only because the authority of our ministry would fall to the ground, but because the name of Christ would be subjected to the foulest disgrace: an unbridled license for all vices would increase with more and more effrontery: the condition of the pious would not only become exposed to all manner of wrongs, but utterly cast down by suffering, - they would lie in sad prostration."*

However, though Calvin viewed discipline as a necessary prerogative of the Church, he was far from sanctioning a repetition of the oppressive hierarchical measures of Catholicism. Primarily he guarded against such by doctrinal and ethical safeguards, by his constant emphasis on a life of holiness, imparting a definite ethical stamp to the entire practise. More specific restraints, however, were inserted in his ecclesiastical polity, in order to guard the headship of Christ. Office in the Church is to be regarded not as a position of power, but of ministry; and office-bearers not so much as rulers over men as servants of Christ. Church office-bearers are to be of equal rank (parity of ^{the} clergy), Of as great significance also is the proviso that no final decisions

* Letters, Vol. II, 426, 428. Cp. also 406 f.

as to excommunication are to be made by a single individual, but only by the Consistory.* Moreover the lay members of the Consistory are to be godly men elected from the Church, hence affording a large measure of lay control.** Finally, excommunication is not to be administered even by the elders acting alone, but "with the knowledge and approbation of the Church, so that the body of the people, without regulating the procedure, may, as witnesses and guardians, observe it and prevent the few from doing anything capriciously."*** In addition to these restraints the entire procedure of excommunication is to be carried on in such a spirit that no one may doubt the headship of Christ, that this is His tribunal, this His own decision.****

Instead of discipline by a hierarchical clergy, as in Catholicism, or the supervision of the civil authorities as in the case of Lutheranism and the German Swiss, Calvin will have it exercised by the men of the Christian Church, chosen from the Church, and

* Inst. IV, xi, 6. "I have never thought it useful to entrust the right of excommunication to single pastors. For the thing is odious, of doubtful example, apt to merge into tyranny, and the Apostles have transmitted to us a contrary practise." Letters III, 67. That this was for Calvin a question of conviction, his practise as well as theory, is indicated by the following letter to Bullinger in 1554 at a critical juncture in the Genevan struggle over the right of excommunication. "When called into the Senate I professed that I pardoned those who sincerely repented, but gave them to understand at the same time that I was but one of the Consistory, and that I had a hundred times rather suffer death (a favourite expression) than assume to myself what was the common right of the Church." Letters, III, 19 f.

** Cp. Chapter V, Section on Democracy, and Ch. IV.

*** Inst. IV, xii, 7.

**** On this section Cp. Rieker, 112-129 and Lang, "R. und G." 165 f.

the final act of excommunication administered only with the approval of the Church. Thus will he protect the Church from the tyranny of either hierarchy or magistracy. It was his aim to conserve the moral and spiritual power of discipline without exercising the oppression of Roman Catholic jurisdiction. How far he succeeded is another question, but in theory, ideal and zeal of purpose no one can gainsay the inherent worth of his effort.

Much also depends upon the answer to the query: who are to be the subjects of discipline? It is apparent from Calvin's letters and the Institutes that it is professing Christians, members of the Church, whose conduct is to be under the surveillance of the Consistory.* Yet the mere accident of birth or residence in Geneva constituted one not only subject to Genevan civil law but to its ecclesiastical law as well. There thus resulted the anomaly of a Catholic or a Libertine being fully as much under the thumb of the Consistory as the most devout Puritan refugee. Inasmuch as the city by popular vote had professed its Reformed faith and agreed to live by the standard of God's word, therefore ipso facto each citizen was made as accountable to the Consistory for his conduct as he was to the State for his taxes. Such was the normal procedure in Christendom and Calvin seems to have taken it for granted. From this unfortunate circumstance issued most of the turbulent civil-ecclesiastical struggles of the succeeding years. Yet that this was not an integral or necessary part of the

* "... to .. fight... for that sacred authority and power of spiritual jurisdiction over the members of the Church ..." Letters I, 293, "... those who profess to be of the household of faith ought to be judged according to the doctrine which is taught." Inst. IV, xi, 5.

Calvinistic system of discipline is apparent from the fact that in the French refugee Church of Strassburg, where Calvin was first able to put his theory into practise, men became members of the Church by their own free act, not by a mere accident of birth or residence. They could join or leave at will. Such was also the case in France where the Protestant minority was of necessity separatist in its polity, and hence discipline was exercised only over those who had voluntarily joined the Church and subjected themselves to it. Calvinistic discipline is quite consonant with a separatist or free Church, but in the case of a State whose citizens are automatically regarded as Christians it cannot but lead to an anomalous condition which to a large extent defeats its own purpose.

Note. In Geneva all citizens, regardless of class or position, were made subject to the discipline of the Church. Clergy and laity alike must bow to the rule of God's word, and a justice as unbiassed as it was severe ruled the city. As Calvin expressed it in writing to Amy Perrin, one of Geneva's leading burghers: "If impartiality be observed in the administration of human law, any departure from it cannot be tolerated in the Church of God. You yourself know, or at least ought to know, what I am; that, at all events, I am one to whom the law of my Heavenly Master is so dear, that the cause of no man on earth will induce me to flinch from maintaining it with a pure conscience I observe that no one has his eyes wide enough open when the case is his own."*

* Letters, II, 42 f.

Calvin's system of discipline as put into practise in Geneva was vitiated by the fact that the Consistory was to such a large extent under the control of the Council. His 1537-1538 attempt to secure a regulation of morals in the Church proved abortive, resulting in a mere expansion of police authority to the sins and private affairs of citizens (a "Polizeimassregel", Lang terms it, "R. und G." 79). The struggle over the Ordinances in 1541 promised little better, for though the Council was not opposed to the granting of nominal powers of censure and discipline to the ministers, it insisted on reserving to itself the right of final judgment on all important cases, especially those concerned with excommunication or readmission to the Lord's Supper. On Calvin's expostulations a compromise was reached with the stipulation "That all this (discipline) shall be done in such fashion that the ministers shall have no civil jurisdiction and shall use none but the spiritual sword of the word of God as St. Paul directs them; and that the authority of the government and of ordinary justice shall in no way be diminished by the Consistory, but that civil authority shall remain unimpaired. And, in particular, where it shall be necessary to make some punishment or constrain the parties, the ministers with the Consistory, having heard the parties and made remonstrances and admonitions as shall be fitting shall report all to the Council, which shall deliberate on their report and order and render judgment according to the merits of the case."*

* Quoted, Walker, 273.

According to the Ordinances of 1541 the Council set the number of lay elders at twelve. Two were to be elected from the Little Council, four from the Council of Sixty, and six from the Council of Two Hundred. They were elected annually by the Councils. At the meetings of the Consistory only a magistrate might preside. The members were called by a messenger of the civil court. Though the preachers sat as regular members, they were always outnumbered by the laymen appointed by the magistracy. Thus the elders that Calvin believed should be chosen from the Church and by the Church for their moral and spiritual fitness, were rather appointed by the State on the basis of political expediency. They were thus civil officials rather than Church elders. That in the mind of the State the difference between the Consistory and an ordinary secular court was insignificant is typified in the obliging regulation that the magistrate, when presiding over the Consistory, should carry as his symbol of office a baton instead of a sword.* The principal Church court thus became a politically appointed adjunct to the State. Yet it took a struggle of fourteen years for Calvin to obtain the final authority in excommunication for this Consistory, which in itself was largely a State controlled body! Little wonder that he regarded the system as only tolerable: "... such as it is" ... "such as these disjointed times permit."**

Even so there was much lack of precision in drawing the exact boundary between the powers of State and Consistory in the matter

* Reyburn, 115 f.

** Letters, I, 292.

of excommunication, a question which led to endless bickering and at least two critical crises. Ostensibly there belonged to the Consistory the power of private admonition, public censure and excommunication. Yet in March 1543, during a meeting of the Consistory, a syndic appeared, bringing notice of an act of the Senate, asserting that to the Consistory belonged the right of admonition only, while the power of excommunication remained a prerogative of the Council. On receipt of this Calvin became adamant, retorting that "such a decree could only be ratified by my death or banishment."*So effective was his threat that the Council again confirmed to the Consistory the right of excommunication. This period witnessed a gradual but only tolerably satisfactory advancement in the practise of discipline.

A final crisis occurred in 1555 when the Council of Two Hundred protested against this imperium in imperio wielded by the Consistory as a threat to the sovereignty of the State, and as a dangerous tyranny akin to the hated apiritual jurisdiction of the Popes. The clergy replied to the effect "that it was the duty of men to submit themselves to the authority of Christ and His apostles, to whom He had given the power to loose and bind; that the magistrate had no more right to oppose himself to spiritual discipline, than the clergy had to intermeddle with the determinations of a temporal judge that the laws were a sufficient defense against any abuse on the part of the Consistory; and that freedom, if Christ was banished, would be but a lamentable servitude**

* Letters, I, 353.

** Quoted Henry, II, 315 f; Cp. Letters II, 424 ff.

The people and Council were so influenced by this reasoning that at last the Consistory was recognised as the undisputed possessor of the power of excommunication.

To a present day Church which enjoys the unquestioned right of spiritual independence, this victory may seem but a hollow mockery. After all the Consistory was more nearly a committee of the Council than the session of a Church. It may seem strange that Calvin should have so insistently struggled for the granting of spiritual autonomy to such a hybrid body. Yet in securing to a so largely State controlled body the power of inflicting a punishment now so generally discarded, this victory had not a little to do with the origin of the spiritual independence of the Church which we now possess. With the exception of certain Anabaptists Calvin was the only prominent Reformation leader who battled for the freedom of the Church from all State domination. As for the Anabaptists, the crudities of a violent minority precluded the possibility of this type of separatist autonomy becoming palatable to the main stream of Protestantism. It is an irony of history that the freedom of the Protestant Church which we now prize so highly should first have been won in connection with a practise of extreme discipline now almost universally held in abeyance. However much we must deprecate certain aspects of the practise in Geneva, we must be forever thankful that it developed the type of virile, whole-souled integrity and piety which stemmed the tide of the Counter Reformation, and that it guaranteed to the new Protestant Church the ancient spiritual autonomy and independence of primitive Christianity.

It should be noted that other Protestants had antedated Calvin in the projected establishment of Church discipline, though only for a temporary period, on a limited scale and with indifferent success. In 1530, seven years before Calvin formulated the Articles in Geneva, Oecolampadius had introduced an independent discipline of morals at Basel. To unite with the ministers in this task three men were appointed for each parish, - two from the Council and one from the general citizenry, thus approximating a lay eldership. Due to the opposition of Bern and Zurich to this exercise of discipline by a consistory and the consequent division of civil and ecclesiastical authority, the plan fell into desuetude. It is possible that this abortive attempt indirectly influenced Calvin.*

Moreover, under Bucer's influence a system of Church discipline had been established at Ulm in 1531. It was in the hands of a consistory composed of two preachers and four members of the magistracy. In the summer of 1541, at the Regensburg Diet in the presence of Bucer and Calvin, Melanchthon proposed that each German bishopric should possess a mixed commission of clergy and lay members whose special task should be the supervision of Church discipline. Lang mentions that in addition a practise of discipline was established at Strassburg in 1534 and Hesse in 1538.** A Lasco likewise established the system at Emden in 1543, and subsequently in the foreign refugee Church of London.

* For a fuller account cp. Walker 191 f. and Werd. 281 ff.

** "R. und G." 187.

Such attempts, however, ^{in the main} met either with absolute failure or only a temporary indifferent success. The civil authorities retained a large measure of control, and the power of excommunication was retained by the State. Bucer probably exerted the greatest single influence upon Calvin in this regard. He sought to counter the biting criticisms of Anabaptists who were pointing the finger of scorn at the Reformed Churches for their alleged lack of a virile moral fibre. The method he chose was a system of Church discipline of whose Biblical grounding Calvin was convinced. It is probable that the influence of Bucer upon Calvin during his exile from 1538-1541 had a direct bearing on the Ordinances of 1541.* Bucer became a connecting link between Calvin and the sects and enabled the Genevan Reformer to appreciate the merit of the Anabaptist emphasis upon holiness, and the necessity of excommunication being regarded as a prerogative of the Church, while at the same time combining this with a strong ecclesiastical sense, and guarding against their ultra-puritanical austerity. But Calvin went much further than Bucer in the application of the practise of discipline to the life of the entire Church and community. Moreover whatever external influences served to shape the outward expression which his system of Church discipline assumed, we find from the very first in Calvin himself² dominating doctrinal and ethical emphasis upon the necessity for the development of Christian character and a Church whose moral integrity is above question, and whose progressive sanctification is one of the chief tasks of the Reformation. Discipline is simply the means to that end, excommu-

* Werd. 309. Cp. also Tr. "Soziallehren," 627 ff.

nication the sanction by which he sought to realise that ideal. As such the practise of discipline becomes the cardinal point in his ecclesiastical polity, and the mirror, as it were, in which we see Calvin himself most clearly reflected.*

An appraisal of Calvin's practise of discipline must reveal shade as well as light. From the modern point of view the least excusable aspect was the civil punishment of ecclesiastical offences. Such was the inevitable result of his insistence that the State must maintain the true religion, suppress idolatry and heresy, vindicate and establish discipline, and in short be the nursing-mother of the Reformed Church. This principle all too often counterbalanced his use of sound teaching, persuasion and spiritual discipline as sanctions to insure moral rectitude, and as such was in essential opposition to Reformation principles.

It had been quite another matter had the State merely imposed civil punishment for lapses in morality and criminal practises which the laws of God and man alike condemn. But when in the suppression of heresy the practise of discipline was the medium used whereby the offender was turned over by the Church to civil officers for corporal punishment or death, we cannot but view this

* The use of excommunication was clearly in view in the Articles of 1536. Moreover, a full month before his exile in 1538, in a letter to Bullinger Calvin expressed his judgment that "... we shall have no lasting Church unless that ancient apostolic discipline be completely restored, which in many respects is much needed among us. We have not yet been able to obtain that the faithful and holy exercise of ecclesiastical excommunication be rescued from the oblivion into which it has fallen." Letters, I, 42. All of which serves to indicate that his post-exilic emphasis on discipline was not solely nor chiefly due to external influences gained during his exile.

askance. No one need waste an iota of sympathy on the "spiritual" Libertines with their notorious moral looseness. Their suppression was a service to Geneva and all society. But it is an altogether different matter when heresy on abstract doctrinal points is made the basis of civil punishment, even to banishment, forfeiture of goods, torture or death. Such was the result of the intimate Church-State relationship, and the severity of punishment reflected the intolerance of the age. Heresy was regarded as a crime against God and hence being more serious than a crime against man, was punishable with equal or greater severity. Calvin can only be blamed for not being 150 years ahead of his age when he might have understood more clearly that freedom of conscience and religious toleration are legacies of the very doctrines for which he battled. It also may help to palliate a harsh judgment if we remember the undoubted fact that in Geneva heresy and immorality were the closest of kin. Moral excesses were the handmaidens of doctrinal irregularities. Yet such abuses must not be thought of as the necessary or inevitable accompaniment of Calvin's ideal. Normally he relied upon the same sanctions as Luther, the preaching of the word and the prompting of the indwelling Christ.

Again, any fair critic must frankly admit that sometimes the punishments inflicted by the Council, on the advice of the Consistory, were inexcusably severe, in a few instances equalling Roman compulsion in cruelty.* However, there were extenuating

* "In 1558-1559 there were 414 trials for such offenses as laughing at Calvin while he was preaching. The penalty for that offense was three days in prison and having to ask pardon of the Consistory." v. A. M. Hunter, 221, Note 1. Cp. Dyer (144), who undoubtedly gives disproportionate emphasis to such cases.

circumstances, and it must be granted that Geneva at its worst could rival degenerate Sodom and Gomorrah, and hence justly elicited stern measures. It is doubtful if a bland tolerance could have held the fort against the moral degeneracy which threatened to engulf the city.

It is not our intention to enter into a discussion of Calvinism and intolerance. However, it must be said that it ill befits the critic who sits in his swivel chair in an age of tolerance and freedom to unthinkingly condemn the intolerance of men who lived centuries ago. We are not in Geneva surrounded on three sides by hostile powers; we do not see infant churches crushed in Spain, in Italy, in France. It is easy for us to criticise by abstract standards of justice, hard to visualise the opposing forces and well-nigh impossible to appreciate the spirit of the age. We try to be neutral, but our mere presence in the twentieth century makes it impossible for us to appreciate the fears and hopes of the sixteenth. We may not excuse, but we should at least attempt to understand and view sympathetically the errors of another age.

It is all very well for an Englishman to condemn Calvin for the burning of Servetus, but let him remember Cranmer, Ridley and Latimer and the "killing time" in Scotland; it is all very well for Scots to condemn, but many was the burning pyre for witches long after Calvin's day; let the American, too, remember the persecution of the Baptists and Quakers a hundred years after Calvin's

time, and as for the Catholic let him remember with shame the brutality of St. Bartholomew's. One is reminded of the words of the Master: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone" At any rate grant Calvin the boon to be interpreted by his own century, and you may well marvel at his moderation as before you have condemned his severity. It is doubtful if there is a spot in Christendom which more moves the heart of the Protestant than the site of the funeral pyre of Servet at Champel. It is with a feeling of contrition, yet humble pride that he pauses there. Error acknowledged, repented of, and overcome often is a mainspring of power, and it is well to remember that at the head of the list of contributors for the erection of this expiatory monument stands the name of the Consistory of Geneva, the lineal descendant of the body which hounded him to his death.

There was also a mark of inconsistency in Calvin's theory of discipline. It is scarcely to be expected that the magistrate will meekly apply civil penalties to purely ecclesiastical offenses, unless he likewise be accorded the right to review the case, to investigate the truth or falsehood of the offender's alleged guilt and pass on the justice of the punishment. For the Church to arrogate to itself alone the right of excommunication and then expect the State to inflict the penalty was somewhat presumptuous. Had the Church kept strictly to its teaching that it sought merely to inflict spiritual, not civil penalties, the State would have possessed little valid excuse for refusing to grant the full power of discipline to Church consistories. Hence in a measure the Church

had itself alone to blame for its many struggles along this line. Excommunication as a spiritual judgment without civil penalties is quite defensible, even indispensable in a free Church; in a State Church it is only so if the Church confines itself to spiritual penalties alone.

It is conceivable of course for the practise of discipline to institutionalize the Church, to emphasise objective, legalistic restraints and hence to minimize the aspect of the Church as a fellowship of believers. But no system is to be judged on the basis of hypothetical defects. To the very last Calvin emphasised the aspect of the Church as a fellowship of believers. The charge that discipline institutionalized the Reformed Church is, as far as Calvin is concerned, so exaggerated as to be false. There is more truth in the accusation that the Biblical Puritanism which he instituted tended to degenerate into a legalism which was so engrossed in the written letter of Scriptural law for every detail of life as to minimize its less tangible but more central message of mercy, grace, love, and Christian liberty. It must be admitted that there is danger in attempting to find a detailed ecclesiastical polity in Scripture. Yet in this too Calvin was the child of his age, and not of his only, but of an age that is even yet too much with us. What legalism there was in connection with the practise of discipline is not traceable to discipline, but to the conception that Scripture is a definite detailed guide book rather than a book of principles, and the story of a Person. Yet even legalism was the exception rather than the rule, and for Calvin

^{Bible}
the_A was no dry code book, but the Book of Life.

It was for the "honour of God" that Calvin sought to establish discipline, that impurity should not taint the Church and bring reproach upon His Name. As has been previously indicated, though this conception was normally in Calvin's hand a noble and inspiring ideal, in the practise of discipline he occasionally went to such extremes as to woefully misrepresent the character of the God Whose Name he sought to protect from insult.

Yet a system should be accorded the privilege of being judged by its fruits, even when these are involuntary. Those who anathematise Calvin's system of discipline would do well to ponder the intimate relation between its establishment and the spiritual autonomy of the Church. Moreover, the weaknesses and excesses incident to the practise of discipline in Geneva were after all but the mere framework of a system which made it possible to describe Geneva, in the now famous words of John Knox, as a place "whair I nether feir noreschame to say is the maist perfyt schoole of Chryst that ever was in the erth since the dayis of the Apostillis In other places I confess Chryst to be trewlie preached; but maneris and religioun so sinceirlie reformat, I have not yit sene in any uther place."* And this was exactly what Calvin strove to do. To make of Geneva a perfect school of Christ was

* In a letter to Mrs. Locke, Dec. 9th, 1556. Works, IV, 240. Several contemporary accounts testify to the gradual development of a singularly acute moral conscience in Geneva; e.g., the narrative of Bernardino Ochino, an Italian refugee. v. Reyburn, 269.

his conscious aim; discipline united with the preaching of the word ~~was~~ the means employed that manners and religion be thus truly reformed. This result was not merely incident to his work; it was the very kernel of his conception of the mission of the Church, to fashion every phase of life according to the expressed will of God.

One shudders to think of the almost inevitable moral collapse which threatened to engulf Geneva. The decadence of such a key city would have materially smoothed the way before the swelling tide of the Counter Reformation. It was the practise of discipline which so nerved the Reformed Church that it stood like flint throwing back upon themselves the waves of Jesuitism which beat around it.

Whatever our animus be toward the inexcusable extremes incident to the practise of discipline, we must acknowledge as an historical fact that it was discipline which overcame Libertinism within, and the onslaughts of the Counter Reformation without and made of Geneva the power house of Western Protestantism. It created in Calvinism a moral energy more virile than Lutheranism had ever known. It nerved the Huguenots of France in their persecutions, the Dutch in their struggles for independence, the Scots in the reformation of their northern kingdom, and the Puritans of both the Old and New Worlds. Discipline gave to the Reformed Church an undying ethical passion which long outlived all external forms in which the practise was originally cast. This germ, this ideal

lived on.

In practise also it is significant that discipline did not limit itself to cultivating and enforcing a high degree of moral rectitude in Church members. Far from it! It delved with equal zeal into the supervision of intricate family, social, political and even economic problems. To the extent that this implied its use as an inquisitorial tool of a pedantic Consistory, we may well view it with alarm. But its good far outbalanced this, and this enveloping interest engendered in the practise of discipline served to impress upon Calvinism an intelligent interest in the Christianisation of every phase of human life. Discipline served to crystallise this conception of the mission of the Church, and as such is of key importance. It impressed upon Calvinism the ideal of a Church which is indeed holy, a passion for righteousness and integrity which had its effect far beyond the life of the believer and the Church in the social and moral life of the entire community; in short it helped to provide the religious basis of much that is best in our modern era of social reform. Its influence upon the social and political structure of the Western world is significant. In the consistories of the Reformed Church Christian laymen were trained in the application of Christian truth to all of life, and even in the basis of constitutional government. The Consistory proved itself a seed-plot of democracy. In Calvinism men were trained to apply the truth of God to all of life, and the practise of discipline was the training school.*

* In his little volume "Protestant Thought Before Kant," (p. 95) McGiffert thus sketches the Calvinistic conception of discipline:

It is an interesting question as to whether we should exercise discipline in the Church to-day; certainly not in its old form; certainly only within the voluntary membership of the Church. We have come to rely almost exclusively upon more inward spiritual restraints, depending upon the efficacy of the public preaching of truth and the conscience of the individual. This is the ideal. But without in the least condoning the prying, spying methods of former generations, it is a question whether any Church can entirely dispense with discipline and retain purity of life. There is still room in the Church for a body of spiritually minded men with a deep knowledge of God's truth, a love for their fellow-men and a true understanding of the mission of the Church, who in a Christlike spirit may call to task professing members of Christ's body who

"The Christian Church is a people predestined to holiness. Their supreme duty is not to serve their fellows and to establish the reign of the spirit of love in all the institutions and relationships of this earth, but to walk humbly with God, to obey Him in all things, and to keep themselves unspotted from the world. The Church is a body apart, a community of holy people, pure both in doctrine and conduct, because governed wholly by the word of God. Ecclesiastical discipline, therefore, must be very strict." 95. Such is a far more complete characterisation of Anabaptist discipline than of the Calvinistic practise. As a description of the latter, it is partial and superficial only, true of a later self-sufficient, pietistic Calvinism but not of the Early Reformed Church. Calvin's great service was that he combined the Anabaptist passion for holiness with a keen appreciation of the value of the Church per se; and for him the Church was never a "body apart," but a body whose chief aim was to establish God's rule according to His word "in all the institutions and relationships of this earth," individual and social. True, a legalism tended to displace "the spirit of love" but to make the Church a "body apart" was precisely what Calvin in distinction from Anabaptism would not do. In fact it was the very activity of the Consistory which impressed upon Calvinism a more comprehensive interest in the Christianisation of all life.

openly flout the solemn obligations they have taken. Both at home and on the mission field such a discipline is most salutary. The necessity for heresy trials is, it is to be hoped, gradually passing away. But surely the Church can never utterly dispense with the practise of discipline which served to focus the well informed conscience of early Calvinism upon all the hideous problems of moral and social life.

CHAPTER VII

THE CHURCH AND THE SOCIAL-ETHICAL SPHERE (Cont.)

Benevolence and Social Reform; The Family; Missions; Church Union;
Education.

"It is not until Calvin that we can speak of Christian social reform and social construction, in so far as we mean the conscious united work of Christian society Before Calvin there had been the sects and the radical ethic of Love, since the time of the original community in Jerusalem. But in every case the practical application of the conception had not been forthcoming, nor its adaptability to the masses, nor its introduction to practical use in the arrangements of the world. In this resemblance to a Christian social constitution lies the most unique of the religious ideas of Calvinism."* Such is the tribute of Ernst Troeltsch after his exhaustive study of the social teachings of the Christian Church. Not that this means that Calvin consciously sought to alter the conservative class system then existent, nor to establish a Christian Socialism as that term was later used. Primitive Calvinism began and remained essentially conservative. But in the case of Calvin there was a conscious focussing of all the

* Tr. "Hibbert Journal", 121.

resources of the Church on the spiritual and material welfare of every citizen of the community; an intelligent and active solicitude for the poor, the unemployed, and the sick, a definite attempt to grapple with the problems of vice, ignorance, drunkenness, indigence, sanitation, industrial depression and profiteering.

As a corollary of the Church's duty in promoting the progressive sanctification of its members through the exercise of discipline, stands the conception of the social-ethical mission of the Church. For Lutheranism the Church remains a fellowship for divine worship. It possesses no distinct task relative to the social-ethical sphere. It is satisfied with the mere offering of the means of grace; it takes purely a negative attitude toward other spheres of life, trusting to the Spirit to guide the individual believer in the pursuit of his Christian calling. With the Reformed Church it is entirely different. In Calvin's mind the Church (though it is primarily this) is not only a society for divine worship, but also, as Rieker styles it, "a society of Christian life and action, a social organism." It possesses social aims and tasks; it organises the whole circle of the Christian's activity; "through good works which he does in and for it, he becomes certain of his election; through work in it he builds the Kingdom of God on earth; the entire civil and social life shall be reformed (von hier aus) conformable to the law of God."*

* Rieker, 68. Both Rieker and Troeltsch ("Soziallehren" 680) maintain that the essence of the difference between Lutheranism and Calvinism lies in ethical and social teachings rather than in the realm of dogmatics.

This distinction in emphasis is important, but may be easily exaggerated. Social reform per se was never a goal of Calvinism. Calvin never could have conceived that a Christian body might possibly be satisfied with this as its sole or predominant aim. Rather he deliberately sought to fashion every sphere of life according to the will of God as expressed in Scripture. When this involved, as it often did, excursions into the social, economic and political spheres, well and good, but in his case the motive and basis of all these wider interests remained purely religious, one might almost say dogmatic.

This distinctive social character of Calvinism even achieved outward expression in the polity of the Church, specifically in the diaconate. Lutheranism had regarded the care of the poor as a Christian duty, to be sure, but had designated no special ecclesiastical agency to accomplish its purpose, rather leaving the problem to the general supervision of the State. It was satisfied with simply evoking Christian character and leaving it to the individual to express such character in his relations with others. But it did not seek as a Church to oversee such charity or benevolence.* Calvin, on the other hand, regarded the diaconate as an important, permanent and necessary organ of the Church, just as clearly based on Scriptural authority as the office and work of pastors, elders and teachers. The institution of the diaconate he of course traced to the record of Acts, vi. 3, and from the Scriptural references concluded that there were two orders of deacons,

* Rieker, 68 f. following Uhlhorn, "Die Christliche Liebesthätigkeit," Bd. III, 141 ff.

one administering alms, the other taking care of the poor in person. However, in Genevan practise there was only the one diaconate, and no mention^{is} made in the Ordinances of two classes. The deacons are to be "stewards of the public treasury of the poor"; the diaconate is a constitutive order of the Church, (the only office open to women).*

The character and qualifications of a deacon are to be as high as those of an elder or pastor,** inasmuch as his work is just as spiritual. The characteristic spirit of Calvinism is clearly revealed in the words with which the Reformer voices his approval of the custom of the early Church, according to which deacons read the word of God to the people, exhorted to prayer, and "were permitted, moreover, to give the cup in the sacred Supper" in order that they might be "reminded by such symbols that what they discharged was not some profane stewardship, but a spiritual function dedicated to God."*** It is as if Calvin were to say, the care of the poor, the social interests of the Church are not secular, but as definitely religious and spiritual as the preaching of the word itself. Judged by his practise this was the Reformer's firm conviction.

Calvin reminds us that in the early ages the deacons, under the general supervision of the bishops, received and administered ecclesiastical funds, not only those for the poor, but also those

* Inst. IV, iii, 9.

** Ibid. Sec. 12.

*** Ibid. iv. 5.

used for the support of the ministry. As time passed, the rapacity of the clergy kept pace with the increase of ecclesiastical revenues and the Catholic diaconate stooped to "sacrilegious depredation" of ecclesiastical goods.* Before Calvin's arrival in Geneva the magistracy had already seized ecclesiastical property, devoting part of it to the support of the new faith, as well as the establishment of a hospital and schools, and the general care of the poor. Hence the Church had practically no revenue of its own, a condition which greatly troubled Calvin. It is not surprising therefore that he called upon the State to care for the poor, as informed and directed by the Consistory or the deacons. According to the Ordinances the latter were chosen in the same manner as the elders, that is by the Council. We have previously noted Calvin's dissatisfaction regarding the disposal of ecclesiastical property in Reformed communities.** He would much rather have had such funds in the hands of the Church, to be administered by the diaconate, subject, if necessary, to the oversight of civil authorities.

Rieker has also noted the important tendency in Calvinism for societies of Christian benevolence and charity to be organised within the Church.*** In the case of Lutheran countries associa-

* Ibid. v, 16.

** Tracts, III, 43, 336.
I, 209 ff.
I, 31, f.

*** 69 f.

tions of mercy and Christian charity grew up outside of the Church, and bore little relationship to the Church, except in so far as Christians, acting as individuals, took part in them. Calvinism, on the other hand, regarded the Church itself as the organiser and supervisor of such societies. Hence in later generations we see that Western Protestantism, predominantly Calvinistic in tone, had its own Church philanthropic and charity organisations, its Church Boards of Missions, Public Welfare, Moral Reform, etc., whereas the Lutheran Church left such activities to free societies with which it had no integral connection. The subject is well worthy a more careful and detailed consideration, for though at first glance of minor importance, its influence on practical Church organisation has been very great indeed. This tendency has at least its beginnings in the fact that for Calvin the Church was not solely a fellowship for worship, but a fellowship for service for the Kingdom of God, and also in the Reformers' conviction that the activities of the Christian spirit in its influence on social and ethical problems are to be inspired, guided and supervised by the Church itself.

As to general benevolence, care of the sick and poor, and oversight of the social problems of the community there is much of interest. Calvin expressly states his disapproval of the immoderate use of Church funds for the adornment of ecclesiastical property, involving as this usually does a corresponding callous indifference to the sufferings of the poor.* Much the same line of thought governed him in his indictment of the doctrine of

* Inst. IV, V, 8, 18.

purgatory: "... its worst result certainly was, that while all, without any command from God, were vying with one another in helping the dead, they utterly neglected the congenial offices of charity, which are so strongly enjoined."*

It may be objected that as an historical fact the lapse of faith in purgatory and the efficacy of indulgences incident to the Reformation caused a great diminution in funds for charity, leading to the necessity for the passage of laws in aid of the poor, not to speak of renewed Church activities to the same end. However, there can be but little question that in view of the unworthy motive of much of this pre-Reformation charity, the money thus obtained was a curse as well as a blessing. Especially does this appear true when it is borne in mind that ecclesiastical revenues were habitually squandered by the priests and very little given to the poor. If we are to believe the testimony of Calvin at all, the poor were shamelessly neglected by Catholicism, and though after the Reformation "the administration is not yet so pure and holy as were to be wished, the poor have ten times more distributed to them than they used to get."**

It is true that the Swiss magistracies seized ecclesiastical property, and hence left the new Church penniless. Naturally, therefore, the efforts of Calvin were chiefly directed toward insuring that the State applied these funds to the legitimate

* Tracts, I, 48.

** Tracts, III, 43.

purposes, such as the support of pastors, the establishment of schools and hospitals and the care of the poor. In any case the motive back of the Reformed Church's benevolence was more Christian and practical than that of the indiscriminate charity of mediaevalism. Calvin saw the mockery of regarding the permanent support of the idle poor as a Christian virtue, and he seems to have recognised the vital distinction between pauperisation and legitimate benevolence. He sensed the necessity of a war on indigence. To this end he aided in the provision of work for the unemployed, and hence made it possible for the city to enforce its laws against begging. The city built a magnificent building to lodge citizens who had temporarily fallen into poverty. Reference will be made in a later connection to the strict laws against the exploitation of the poor. It is well known that Geneva not only made arrangements to care for the poor, but also for the refugees who flocked by the thousands within its hospitable walls.

As an incentive to true benevolence Calvin exhorts believers to do good to all men. We are to treat our lowliest neighbour as we would treat our Lord Himself. Even the very stranger, him to whom you seem to be bound by no ties of duty, "the Lord has substituted him as it were into His own place, that in him you may recognise the many great obligations under which the Lord has laid you to Himself." What higher motive for Christian charity? As Christians we should love our enemies, "render good for evil, and blessing for cursing, remembering that we are not to reflect on the wickedness of men, but look to the image of God in them,

an image which, covering and obliterating their faults, should by its beauty and dignity allure us to love and embrace them."*

All the Protestant Churches were desirous of aiding the distressed and poor, but Calvinism had this distinct advantage, that in its consistory and diaconate it possessed the specific Church organs through which it could effectively deal with the social problems of the day. The diaconate cared not only for the poor but also for the sick. Under the Ordinances of 1541 four deacons were designated as trustees of the Genevan hospital.** The prisons also were regularly visited by a minister accompanied by a member of the Council.

The visitation of the sick is the subject of a special section in the liturgical forms adopted at Geneva under the auspices of Calvin. Church visitation was always a prominent feature, thus bringing even the lowliest individual into personal contact with the ministers and elders, and rendering the latter cognizant of the needs of all. There was a yearly visitation before Easter when a minister and elder called at every home, and also the pre-Communion visitation, as well as frequent visitations in case of illness or other emergency. Primarily, of course, spiritual food is to be tendered the sick, but it is significant that in the liturgical forms a final suggestion is added to the effect that

* Inst. III, vii, 6.

** "The hospital provided care not merely for the sick, for whose relief a physician and a surgeon were ordered, but a refuge for the superannuated, for indigent widows and orphans." Walker, 274. It was decreed that no one should suffer himself to lie ill abed for more than three days without notifying the minister, not a bad regulation for Church members. Henry, I, 360 f.

"if the minister has anything whereby he can console and give relief to the afflicted poor, let him not spare, but show to all a true example of charity."* How characteristic of the Reformer, almost Franciscan in the manner in which he embraced poverty, who set an outstanding example of frugal living and self-sacrifice. On one occasion when the Council presented him with a present of ten crowns, he returned the money, asking that it be distributed to others poorer than himself "and even to diminish his stipend in order to benefit them."** During his first two years in Geneva the remuneration given him was so slight that he had to sell his books, so, as he says, "there will be enough to satisfy my landlord till next winter: as to the future, the Lord will provide."*** Bonnet also states that Calvin refused the year's pension which the magistrates of Strassburg offered him as a token of their esteem when he returned to Geneva.**** Calvin always lived on the ragged edge of poverty, as he insisted on giving so much to the poor, the persecuted, and the students whom he aided in obtaining their education,^{so} that when he died he left a bare two hundred dollars!

It is natural that Calvin should regard the recurrent ravages of the plague in Geneva as a punishment of God, blissfully ignorant that the Genevan citizens by their lack of sewage disposal, their wilful contamination of wells and the Rhone were bringing

* Tracts, II, 128.

** Quoted Bonnet, "Letters of Calvin," II, 139, Note 2.

*** Letters, I, 112.

**** Letters, I, 269, Note 1. Cp. Preface to "Psalms," xlvii.

upon themselves all manner of disease. Doumergue has brought to light the lamentable lack of any proper system of sanitation in Geneva. But the Consistory, like Calvin, proved all-embracing in its interests. It acted as truant officer, health and fire inspector, and Church monitor with equal alacrity, prying into the private affairs of individuals with merciless zeal, pedantic in the extreme, and taking upon itself duties which the widest stretch of the imagination could not accord to a body of Church elders. Crude it might be, but the significant fact is that so many of the reforms were undertaken by the Council at the express insistence of the pastors and Consistory. The Church assumed a new role, namely, that of monitor of the social conscience of the State, and prodded on by its advice, leadership and censure, the Genevan authorities seriously attempted the solution of social and ethical problems with which we still grapple to-day.

For example, the moral filth of Geneva occupied Calvin's particular attention. The indiscriminate bathing establishments were a fruitful source of vice. Prostitution had been winked at and even secretly supported by some of the degenerate priests. Public dancing was often accompanied by moral excesses which outraged decent citizens and led them to welcome the leadership of the Reformer in cleaning up the disgusting mess. Calvin did so, not so much by aiming to add new statutes to the law books as in strengthening the enforcement of existing ordinances. Penalties were cruel, but no impartial observer can refrain from applauding the moral purpose of this attempt. 1546 witnessed a

law closing houses of ill fame and instructing the women to change their lives or leave the city. Subsequent statutes regulated the loosely conducted public bathing establishments and provided the severest punishments for adultery.*

Gambling, profane singing, and boisterous taverns also came in for their share of attention. Calvin was of course not averse to the use of wine in moderation, but he had no sympathy with the turbulent taverns of his day, rightly diagnosing them as centers of vice and crime.** It is with a keen satisfaction that we view the attempt of 1546 to reform the public houses of Geneva. In that year they were officially abolished and in their place were substituted five clubs where bread and wine were sold at cost. No swearing, obscene language, singing, dancing, or drunkenness was permitted, and even card-playing was subject to severe restrictions. If accompanied with due reverence psalms or hymns might be sung. A Bible occupied a central place, and grace was to be said before partaking of all food and drink!*** In short the authorities sought to establish a strict, Church-inspired, governmental control of the liquor trade!

Needless to say the attempt failed, and no wonder when three and a half centuries later we must contend with the same problem.

* Cp. Henry, I, 359 ff., A. M. Hunter, Ch. XIV, Reyburn, 335-343, etc. Details are not given in the present thesis, because the matter has been so fully covered by various writers; suffice it here to indicate tendencies rather than specific enactments.

** When Calvin was commissioned to draw up a civil constitution.... the Council, for his stimulus, presented him with a barrel of well-matured wine! A. M. Hunter 251. Cp. Doumergue, in "C. and R." p.48

*** Reyburn, 123 f.

A reformed public house of this nature would be scouted at in Presbyterian Scotland in the year of our Lord 1928! The taverns were reopened, and even Calvin had to acknowledge the defeat of this scheme to regulate morals. However, the Church to-day which is leading the van in an attempt to control the traffic which is damning the bodies and souls of men for whom Christ died, - the Church will take a peculiar satisfaction in this sincere though abortive attempt to throttle the greatest single source of evil with which the conscience of the world must deal.

There was a strict censorship of the press and of the theatre, though plays were sometimes presented with the express approval of the pastors.* Calvin did not seek to proscribe all public amusements; far from it! He only sought to curb those which he honestly believed to be fraught with danger to the community. Naturally the regulations controlling card-playing and dancing were fiercely resented by many, and feeling ran high against this foreign upstart who not only sought to but succeeded in curbing their personal liberties.

For details of social and moral reform we find little help in the legal enactments of the 16th century town; but for inspiration and motive we find much worthy of imitation. In Geneva the rich were urged to bear the burdens of the poor and sick, gains were to be put to the welfare of the community and Church, and a

* A. M. Hunter informs us that once Calvin "consented to postpone the evening sermon to allow of time for the piece to be presented in its completeness." (p. 263) Cp. Letters, II, 48, Note 2. In 1557 Calvin informed the Council of a new invention which, it was claimed, would cut in half the normal expenditure for heating

sense of communal responsibility was engendered in the people. They were impressed with the idea that the Christian life is not primarily subjective, but is a campaign for the Kingdom of God! The fact that the Consistory took upon itself a concern for the proper scavenging of the city, the sweeping of chimneys, the regulation of public houses, - such is not particularly significant in itself, were it not that it impressed upon the little Church a definite social interest which outlived all Genevan pedantry and helped to shape the entire outlook of the Reformed Church. Calvin presaged the concern which the modern Church and community must feel for the welfare of the meanest and most insignificant of its members. It would seem as if the little Church were doing its utmost to obey literally the command of the Saviour: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me."

THE FAMILY

A short section dealing with the attitude of the early Reformed Church to family life may not be inappropriate. Regarding the family and sexual ethic Calvin agreed in the main with the teaching of Luther. Both Reformers were utterly opposed to the mediaeval practise which exalted celibacy above marriage, and which extracted from monks vows of perpetual continence. Such a custom the Reformers regarded as an unnecessary tempting of Providence, and the fruitful source of vice and lust. Calvin waxed particularly indignant against the prevalent practise of inducing stoves and furnaces ... "Calvin was instructed to examine the invention and report." Reyburn 211.

and even compelling young girls before adolescence to take vows of permanent virginity.* The Reformer also regarded perpetual continence as a "special gift not given to all," (Mt. xix, 11). Only God can give power to fight the lusts within, and vows unnecessarily contracted are a snare to the soul. Marriage is the God-appointed remedy for those to whom the special gift of continence has not been given.**

Protestantism destroyed the social ideal of monasticism and exalted the family as the primary social unit and marriage as the normal human relationship. The ideal of the celibate monk was replaced by that of the "Protestant citizen pastor and his household."*** The Protestant minister did not dwell apart, but had it within his power to make his family life a pattern for Christian laymen. The ideal of virginity utterly ceased to influence the new Church and the modern social order which it ushered in. A complete realignment of social custom resulted from this desertion of the monastic ideal and the subsequent exaltation of the family.

Calvin regarded marriage as a divine institution established by God and sanctified by His blessing. In refusing priests permission to marry, the Church had forbidden what God had left free, a liberty expressly provided for in the word of God. Marriage as a sacrament was denied. Protestantism putting it, as Troeltsch so well expresses it, "on the basis of a more ethical and personal

* Inst. IV, xiii, 19.

** Inst. IV, xiii, 17; II, viii, 42 ff.

*** Troeltsch, "P. and P." 144.

relation, made possible divorce and remarriage, and thus prepared the way for a freer movement of the individual..." Yet marriage was regarded as primarily a "prophylactic against the sinful depravity of lust."* Calvinism especially emphasised that the main purpose of marriage is the begetting of children. Yet, as Troeltsch observes, the sexual relationship was not refined and separated from all thought of original sin, as this has been done by later poetry and art. The spiritual and social independence of women, Troeltsch avers, is to be found among the Humanists, and their religious emancipation among the sects.

Naturally the age-old conception of the husband as the head of house and ruler over his wife and children remained the conception of Protestantism. In Geneva punishment for disobedience to parents was unwarrantably severe, even cruel.**

* Troeltsch, "P. and P." 93 ff. Cp. "Soziallehren", 732 f.

** Henry, (I, 361 f.) relates that in 1563 a young girl was confined, fed on bread and water, and forced to publicly confess her repentance because she had insulted her mother ... In 1568 (four years after Calvin's death) a child was beheaded for having struck his parents ... It is good to know that the cruelty of instructors to children was also punished. We sometimes wonder why the preaching of the fatherhood of God has not sooner resulted in a true brotherhood of man. It is in part due to an unworthy conception of fatherhood. The severity of the punishments just referred to affords a good commentary on the 16th century idea of human fatherhood. Perhaps unconsciously, but none the less potently, this conception of fatherhood was projected into the spiritual sphere and the Father God was regarded as a magnified human father, not only antagonistic to sin but delighting in wrath, stern and capricious. Woe betide us if much of the prevailing 20th century conception of fatherhood be projected into the realm of the spirit. In fact it is from this very source that has issued the enfeebling conception of the Divine as an indulgent pampering parent, a conception which has been ironically phrased the papahood of God.

Calvin's views on the sacredness of the marriage tie are reflected in the severity of the Genevan legislation. The penalty for adultery was banishment or death. This severity struck a responsive note in the hearts of the best citizens, who were willing to assist Calvin in his effort to stamp out vice.* The Consistory and Council were no respecter of persons and the first families of Geneva were held as accountable for moral delinquencies as were the humblest citizens.

According to the Ordinances all conjugal cases were first to be considered by the Consistory, which was to attempt the difficult but praiseworthy task of reconciliation.** Thus Calvin cast every possible spiritual sanction of the Church about the marriage relationship in an attempt to keep it unsullied and unbroken. Yet, lest the sole jurisdiction of the Church over such cases lead to the tyranny of Catholic practise it was arranged that if a judicial decision were necessary, the Council was to judge the matter. This was the course followed in the case of the divorce of Anthony Calvin, the Reformer's brother.***

Calvin recognised the validity of divorce in the case of adultery and the remarriage of the innocent party. For example, the case of Anthony Calvin, the brother of the Reformer. In 1548

* It is even reported of a Genevan banker found guilty of adultery that he died praising God that justice was so well applied.

** Henry, I, 386.

*** Inst. IV, xix, 37.

he was married to Anne de Fer, one of the daughters of Nicholas de Fer, a wealthy French refugee. The Reformer and his brother made their home together. Early in 1557 it was discovered that Anthony's wife had committed adultery with the hunchbacked Peter Daguet, Calvin's servant. The Reformer felt the disgrace very keenly indeed. How it must have cut him to the quick to find adultery in his own home, and he the exponent of a spotless moral integrity and the advocate of the strictest discipline for offenders against morality. As he expressed himself in writing to Viret (January 7, 1557): "My grief does not permit me to say more ... The only consolation we have in this affliction is that my brother will be freed from her by a divorce."* Again in a letter to Farel (February 3, 1557): "Our private calamity almost completely absorbs us. The judges find no way of disengaging my brother. I interpret their blindness as a just punishment for our own, because for upwards of two years^{though} I was pillaged by a thief, I saw nothing. My brother perceived neither the thief nor the adulterer. But if no results can be obtained judicially, we are determined to have recourse to some other method, to break through the difficulty. I warn you, however, not to let a word escape you on this subject, for I should be loth to resort to this measure unless compelled by an urgent necessity."** We can only conjecture as to what this "other method" may refer.

* Letters, III, 308.

** Letters, III, 314, f.

The case was first laid before the Consistory and then referred to the Little Council. The Registers of the Council for 15th of February, 1557, record the divorce: "Anthony Calvin obtained his divorce on account of the adultery of his wife, who is banished on pain of being publicly whipped."*

In 1560 (four years before Calvin's death) Anthony was re-married, his second wife being the widow of the Genevan minister John de Saint-André, a former refugee from Besançon. To this union were born four children, one son, John, and three daughters who died of the plague in 1571. This remarriage of the Reformer's brother must have horrified Catholic public feeling. Evidently, however, it met with the full approval of Calvin, for we find John and Dorothy, children of the second marriage, each left a small sum in the will of the Reformer, and Anthony "my well beloved brother" designated as his heir.** Calvin was not the man to have thus remembered his brother had he disapproved of his remarriage. Moreover in the Institutes there is a section which dispels all doubt on this issue, viz., "Then they (the Catholic hierarchy) enacted laws by which they confirmed their tyranny, - laws partly impious toward God, partly fraught with injustice toward men they frame degrees of kindred contrary to the laws of all nations, and even the polity of Moses, and enact that a husband who has repudiated an adulteress may not marry again..."***

* Bonnet, Letters of Calvin, III, 315, Note 1.

** Letters, IV, 367.

*** Inst. IV, xix, 37. Unfortunately there is no mention of the Reformer's attitude in case the innocent party be the wife.

As far as Calvinism is concerned there ended the unfair discrimination which Catholicism had directed against the innocent party, and the remarriage of the latter was regarded as legitimate, in itself no small advance over mediaeval family and sexual ethics.

Even the last years of the Reformer's life were destined to give him little peace, and it was a shame greater than any which had ever befallen him when, in March 1562, his stepdaughter Judith (daughter of Idelette de Bure by her first marriage) was found guilty of a like disgrace. This weighed upon him even more heavily than the former case, and it appears from a letter to Bullinger that his agony was so great as to drive him from the city into the solitude of the country alone with God and his grief.* Little wonder, for Calvin had sore material for reflection. Only too well would he remember Idelette's solicitude for her children as she lay dying. Then he had promised her (as he tells us in a letter to Viret) that he would not fail in discharging his duty to her children. "Taking up the matter immediately, she said, 'I have already committed them to God.' When I said that that was not to prevent me from caring for them, she replied, 'I know that you will not neglect what you know has been committed to God Assuredly the principal thing is that they live a pious and holy life. My husband is not to be urged to instruct them in religious knowledge and in the fear of God. If they be pious, I am sure he will gladly be a father to them; but if not, they do not deserve that I should ask for aught in their behalf,'"^{following} which stern sentiment

* Opera, xix, 327, quoted Walker, 358. Cp. Penning, 282.

Calvin expresses his admiration for her "nobleness of mind."*

One cannot help but question if Calvin sufficiently emphasised the love of God for the sinner as well as the saint. At any rate there are few sadder or more poignant pictures in history than that of the grim Calvin, long since a widower, broken in health, his own death near at hand, off in the solitude of a country place alone with his grief and shame. It is a picture calculated to arouse pity rather than censure.

MISSIONS

Even a cursory treatment of the present day activities of the Church would be woefully incomplete without a section in reference to the missionary enterprise. Do we find any inkling of this in the mission of the Church as envisaged by Calvin? The discovery of the Americas at the end of the 15th century had given a new impetus to Catholic missions, and friars soon followed in the train of the Spanish and Portuguese traders. By the middle of the 16th century the work was more energetically pursued by the Jesuits, who were political adventurers as well as religious zealots. Indirectly the Reformation furnished the impulse which prompted this movement, for it was a desire to recoup the Church for the losses it had suffered in Europe which impelled the Jesuits, led by venturesome spirits like Xavier, to seek new converts in the Far East.

* Letters, II, 202 f. Regarding the home life of Calvin see Lang, "R. und G." Ch. 2; Henry, I, 263., and Doumergue's monumental work Bd. II, 441-478. Calvin was happily married for a period of nine years, and though a great deal is not known about his home life, it is evident that it was of great help and comfort to him. He speaks of his wife with genuine affection.

Zwingli, it is true, had cherished the charitable view that certain of the heathen philosophers were among the elect of God. There is, however, nothing to indicate that this conviction aroused any missionary fervour in him. He, like the other Reformers, was quite content to leave the heathen to the uncovenanted mercies of God. No one questions that the Gospel for which Calvin battled so insistently sanctions, yea commands the missionary enterprise. But in the main the Reformers did not recognise it as such.* There were of course extenuating circumstances. The newly discovered lands were far removed from Europe, separated by long sea journeys, and ignorance of them was still general. Moreover, the Reformers were so preoccupied with the desperate conditions in Europe as to preclude any extensive foreign missionary undertaking. When the battle was with utmost difficulty being carried on from village to village it is no wonder that they had little thought for the regions beyond. Indeed the work they were carrying on was in itself missionary in aim and tone. Calvin's religious interests revealed him as one of the greatest internationalists of history. From Poland to Spain, from Scandinavia to Italy, from Germany to Scotland, from France to the Danube, from Switzerland to England, already his influence reached to the uttermost limits of Europe. He was a world figure, and his efforts (largely by his correspondence and books) to reach men for the Gospel already encompassed most of the then known world.

* On Calvin and Missions, v. Stähelin, II, 234 ff., Henry, II, 360; Reyburn, 263-266; Hunter, 154 f.

In view of the desperate conditions in Europe where the Reformation was fighting for its very existence we could scarcely hope to witness extensive missionary operations. Yet we should at least expect to find an appreciation of the Church's missionary responsibility for the lands beyond, but we look almost in vain. There has been occasion to indicate that the doctrine of election as Calvin presented it did not a whit reduce the responsibility of the Church for the preaching of the Gospel, inasmuch as this is the preordained means through which the Spirit of God works in calling men. No more could it have throttled the development of the missionary enterprise. It was only a much later and debased Calvinism which could foster its distrust of missions by a dogmatical use of the doctrine of double-edged predestination. For all Calvin said or taught to the contrary there might be millions of elect in regions yet unreached by the Gospel. Indeed the Calvinist may be a hypothetical universalist. Even if God's love be strictly limited to the elect, as Calvin with disconcerting frankness maintained, even so the Church cannot tell who are elect and who are reprobate, and it must preach the Gospel with unflagging zeal to all men. Hence, we should not give undue prominence to such a statement as the following: "Who, I ask, can deny the right of God to have the free and uncontrolled disposal of His gifts, to select the nations which He may be pleased to illuminate...."*, inasmuch as in any given case this ~~does~~ not at all excuse the Church from its duty to publish abroad the Gospel.

* Inst. II, xi, 14.

A more serious concern is Calvin's assertion that, in spite of the fact that we should love all mankind, preference should be given to those whom God has joined to us by specially close ties.* Yet there are not lacking expressions which should logically lead to a missionary interest. In commenting on the Great Commission Calvin recognises the obligation: "The Lord commands the ministers of the Gospel to go to a distance in order to spread the doctrine of salvation in every part of the world." In the Institutes he again refers to the corresponding text of Mark, xvi, 15 in the words: "No fixed limits are given them, but the whole world is assigned to be reduced under the obedience of Christ, that by spreading the Gospel as widely as they could, they might everywhere erect His Kingdom."**

Indeed Calvin so far appreciates the Gospel spirit as to insist that love of neighbour infers love not only for kindred and friends, "but also those who are unknown to us, and even our enemies," because "they are connected (with us) by that tie by which God has bound the whole human race together. This tie is sacred and inviolable, and no man's depravity can abolish it."*** The import of such phraseology is undoubtedly missionary, yet Calvin did not put it to such practise. Indeed in his sketch of ecclesiastical polity he distinctly states that the offices of apostles, prophets and evangelists were temporary, not permanent orders of the Church, "only to endure so long as churches were

* Commentaries, "Acts," xi, 29.

** Inst. IV, iii, 4.

*** "Genevan Catechism," Tracts, II, 68.

to be formed where none previously existed although I deny not, that afterward God occasionally raised up apostles, or at least evangelists, in their stead, as has been done in our time."*

Yet in spite of the fact that Calvin's teaching did imply and even distinctly state the legitimacy of missions, the Reformer saw no need that the three orders of the early Church be renewed in his day. The Catholic friars were even then threading their perilous way to distant lands. Yet Calvin seemed almost blind to missionary work, - almost, for he was connected with one inspiring though tragic enterprise.

Erasmus, in his first book of his treatise on preaching ("Ecclesiastes sive concionator evangelicus"), had already struck a fervent missionary note. But to the French Huguenot, Admiral Coligny, belongs the honour of initiating the first Protestant missionary enterprise as an adjunct to an ambitious plan for colonisation. He had conceived the idea of planning in the newly discovered Americas a refuge for the distressed Protestants of France. With the approval of Henry II, in July 1555 he dispatched a certain Nicholas Durant of Villegagnon to found a colony in Brazil. Villegagnon first landed at Rio de Janeiro, but finding the region inhospitable, and harassed by both savages and Spaniards he withdrew to an island a short distance from shore. Feeling the need of reinforcements, he wrote to Coligny asking for the dispatch of more colonists and two ministers. The Admiral referred the latter request to Calvin, under whose direction the Church of

* Inst. IV, iii, 4.

Geneva commissioned Pierre Richer and Guillaume Chartier for the perilous enterprise. These set sail in November, 1556, in company with some 290 colonists.

Though the Brazilian project was primarily a colonisation scheme, and though the pastors were expected to minister to the colonists, they attempted, with little success it must be admitted, to convert the natives of the district. That Calvin was regarded as the spiritual father of the enterprise is clearly indicated by the fact that not only Villegagnon but also Chartier and Richer wrote to him regarding the difficulties which faced them in the New World. Richer detailed to Calvin the obstacles confronting them in their efforts to convert the savages. The natives seemed bereft of moral virtue, their language proved an almost insurmountable barrier, and the country itself was wild and unfruitful. Thus the little Church of Geneva with Calvin at its head somewhat unwittingly played the role of the first missionary society of Protestantism.

But the colony did not prosper. Villegagnon himself had never renounced Catholicism, and though he had outwardly conformed to the new faith, he had evidently been insincere in his confession. At any rate he did not possess sufficient stamina, and succumbed to the intrigues of the French Catholics. Hence the Calvinists were forced to flee. Some twenty odd of them, including the two pastors, set sail for France. On the discovery that the ship was leaking, five of the number took a small boat and returned to shore,

preferring to trust themselves to the mercy of the Catholic authorities. But the hapless Huguenots were shown no compassion and were flung from a cliff to their death. Thus closed the first episode in the checkered career of Calvinism in the Americas; thus ended the only active interest the Reformer ever took in the preaching of the Gospel to heathen lands.

The lack of a stronger missionary interest cannot be referred to eschatological pessimism, of which Calvin was singularly free, nor, as has been noted above, even to the doctrine of double-edged predestination, but rather to ignorance regarding the New World, and to the necessary preoccupation of the Church with the critical task of conserving the newly awakened religious life of Europe, and stemming the tide of a reawakened Catholicism. A Church which even to-day has so little taken to heart the cause of world-wide evangelisation can scarcely with propriety point the finger of scorn at the hard-pressed Reformers of the 16th century. It were easy to blame them, but it is far more a matter of wonder that in the welter of their almost superhuman efforts in Europe they found occasion for even this brief but tragic enterprise. It is inspiring to remember that the first effort in Protestant missions and colonisation emanated from the French Calvinist, Admiral Coligny, the friend of Calvin, and that when the call came the little Church of Calvin in Geneva had men ready and trained to proceed to far away Brazil, there to become the leaders of the first missionary enterprise of a revived faith.

CHURCH UNION

No single aspect of the Reformation so merited the taunts of

Catholicism as its utter disregard for the unity of Christ's body. The petty, childish divisions which have marred the good name of Protestantism have been the particular curse of the Calvinistic churches. They seem to have had an extraordinary genius for schism, second only to the "atomic separatism" of the sects of the day. Hence it is with a peculiar interest that we view the labours of Calvin in his effort to heal the divisions of Protestantism. To that end he toiled with all his usual fervour and far more than his normal moderation and tact.

Most historians recognise that the great split of the Church at the Reformation was a well-nigh inevitable tragedy. But as Dr. Leckie has shown,* the destruction of the ideal of unity has greatly impoverished Protestantism, just as the loss of such varied forms of energy, hope, and service has been a great blow to the Roman communion. If it had to be a clean cut choice between the external, enforced unity of Catholicism and our present divisions, no Protestant would hesitate for a moment. It is then humbling and refreshing to discover that Calvin, in the very heat of the conflict, never for an instant forgot the ideal of unity. Surely we have far less excuse than he.

Calvin's ideal was for an alliance between or even organic union of all the evangelical forces, including the Lutherans, Zwinglians, Anglican, and the French and Swiss Reformed churches. Nor was he at all unreasonable in demanding or even expecting absolute

* "Vocation of Church," Ch. IV.

agreement in details of doctrine. He realised that differing circumstances rendered perfect uniformity impractical, even undesirable, and he was quite satisfied if the churches were agreed as to the necessary heads of true doctrine. Calvin and Bullinger did not see eye to eye in regard to the sacraments, yet they remained in close cooperation.* That Calvin disagreed with Zwingli on several points of doctrine and polity did not keep him from an earnest attempt to reach a common understanding with the Church of Zurich. The same might be said of his relations with Melanchthon, whom he regarded with a singularly warm affection. Differ with Luther he might and did, but this did not prevent him from retaining a profound admiration for the older Reformer.** Indeed he cautioned Bullinger lest he be too impatient with Luther on account of the latter's bitter, unjustified invectives against the Protestant leaders of Switzerland (in his "Kurzes Bekenntniss vom Abendmahl"): "I do earnestly desire to put you in mind ... that you would consider how eminent a man Luther is, and the excellent endowments wherewith he is gifted, with what strength of mind and resolute constancy, with how great skill, with what efficiency and

* "But in whatever way I may hold the firm persuasion of a greater communication of Christ in the sacraments than you express in words, we will not, on that account, cease to hold the same Christ, and to be one in Him. Some day, perhaps, it will be given us to unite in fuller harmony of opinion." Letters, II, 146. Again, (to Bullinger) "Although, however, I differ from you in opinion, this does not imply the least severance of affection; just as I cultivate the friendship of Bucer, and yet am free to dissent occasionally from his views." Letters, II, 197.

** In answer to the complaint that he did not everywhere subscribe to the interpretations of Luther, Calvin replied: "But if it shall no longer be permitted to each interpreter on the different passages of Scripture to bring forward his opinion, into what a depth of servility have we fallen." Letters, III, 154.

power of doctrinal statement, he hath hitherto devoted his whole energy to overthrow the reign of Antichrist, and at the same time to diffuse far and near the doctrine of salvation. Often have I been wont to declare, that even although he were to call me a devil, I should still not the less hold him in such honour that I must acknowledge him to be an illustrious servant of God a most distinguished servant of Christ, to whom we are all largely indebted.* Would that Luther had shown like moderation and Christian forbearance! No letter of all the hundreds which Calvin wrote compels more interest than that of January 21, 1545 to Luther, in which Calvin addresses the older Reformer as "most renowned sir, most distinguished minister of Christ, and my ever-honoured father."** Melanchthon, however, did not even dare present the letter to Luther, because the latter at this time was so soured by the sacramental disputes as to render his judgments unfair and unkind.

Calvin, as is well known, gave his assent to the Augsburg Confession. He likewise tolerated differences in ecclesiastical polity, even episcopacy, and was by no means a stickler for an absolute uniformity of ceremonies. He was deeply mortified that Protestantism which taught the true doctrine should stoop to mutual invective and vituperation. "Oh God of grace, what pleasant sport and pastime do we afford to the Papists, as if we had hired

* Letters, I, 409 f. Cp. also Letters III, 91, where Calvin seeks to draw a veil over the ill temper of Luther.

** Letters, I, 418. Luther's unreasoning petulance toward the Reformed churches is one of the tragedies of history. Had he been at all sympathetic it is not unlikely that there might have been consummated an organic union of the Lutheran and Reformed churches.

ourselves to do their work!"*

Hence it was with open arms that Calvin welcomed the proposal for an international Protestant conference. The honour belongs to Archbishop Cranmer of proposing the calling of a Reformed Synod, in order that the Protestants might discuss points of doctrine and arrive at some measure of unity. In his reply Calvin commented on the proposal "as just and wise," the scheme being to hold the meeting in England under the patronage of the young Protestant king, Edward VI. "And would that it were attainable to bring together into some place, from various Churches, men eminent for their learning, and that after having carefully discussed the main points of belief one by one, they should, from their united judgments, hand down to posterity the true doctrine of Scripture So much does this concern me, that, could I be of any service, I would not grudge to cross even ten seas, if need were, on account of it ... I think it right for me, at whatever cost of toil and trouble, to seek to obtain this object (and I) implore you to increase your exertions, until something at least shall have been accomplished, if not all that we could desire..."**

Due to the untimely death of the young King Edward and the accession of Catholic Mary to the throne, the proposal had to be abandoned. Yet Calvin continued his efforts to achieve unity among the Swiss churches. He did not succeed, but in 1549 at least he

* Letters, I, 414.

** Letters, III, 330, ff.

achieved an agreement (the Consensus) in regard to the much disputed subject of the Lord's Supper, and hence paved the way for the later consummation of the union under the leadership of his friend, Bullinger. His other efforts for union failed, such as his proposal for an international conference under the presidency of the King of France. Yet his was the ideal of a reunited Christendom, with the pure Gospel as its message. In spite of the fact that this was not achieved he did succeed in engendering a remarkable unity of spirit among all Protestants, with the exception of the Lutheran groups. His aim was noble, his zeal undying, and the task remains to us to realise his ideal as expressed in a letter to à Lasco: "Fain would I that such a harmony reigned among all the churches of Christ in this world, that the angels might sing to us from heaven!"*

EDUCATION

The preaching of the word to bring men the truths of the Gospel, discipline to produce a Church and people of virile Christian character, education to insure the development of a ministry and laity that can give a reason for the faith that is in them, - such was the well-rounded program of the Genevan Church. It is true that Geneva had not been without educational facilities before Calvin's arrival. In addition to a few private schools, it is known that more than a century before a municipal school, called the "Great School," had been established. Though it had been closed, prior to the Reformation (in 1534) it was reopened

* Ruchat, vi, 558, quoted Henry, II, 305.

but promptly closed again. In May 1536 the Council of 200 chose Antoine Saunier a friend of Farel's, to become head of the municipal school, in company with two assistants. On May 21st at the General Assembly of the citizens when the Reformation was publicly adopted, a resolution was also passed providing that all citizens should be bound to send their children to school, and that a large enough salary be paid the master so that the poor might be taught free. Thus a system of universal compulsory primary education for Geneva's boys and girls had been projected before the arrival of Calvin.* He at once entered into the scheme with great zeal, and the later development of the educational systems was largely due to his constant inspiration and guidance. He developed plans for the expansion of the school to include the study of ancient languages. However, on the occasion of his exile two years later the school fell into desuetude.

The religious education of the young was always a primary consideration with Calvin. The Articles of 1537 provided for a "brief and easy outline of the Christian faith, which should be taught to all children, and at certain seasons of the year they should come before the ministers to be questioned and examined, and to receive more ample explanation according as there shall be need in proportion to the capacity of each, until they are approved as sufficiently instructed."** In accordance with this sentiment the first edition of the Genevan Catechism was published,

* Foster, "Am. Hist. Rev." 235.

** Opera, xa, p. 13, quoted Walker, 188.

although from a modern point of view the outline is neither "brief" nor "easy" and scarcely adaptable to children. Calvin realised full well that to develop a Church which should endure, provision for the religious education of its children must be a primary concern.* He would have no patience whatsoever with the present day suicidal policy of desultory religious education.

During his exile in Strassburg Calvin was very active in the school of that city. As a professor of Biblical exegesis and theology he began his renowned work as an expositor of Scripture. The school at Strassburg with its departments of mathematics, law, ancient languages and theology undoubtedly fired him with the determination that in Geneva also such a school could and should be established.

The Ordinances of 1541, adopted immediately after Calvin's return to Geneva, provided for the appointment of a new order of Church officials, the teachers. Their work was to consist chiefly in the education of the young in the doctrines of the word of God. However, in order that they might gain greatest profit from their study of Scripture, Calvin provided that they must first be introduced to the study of science and the languages. This projection of religious education into the secular sphere is of significance for it involved more than mere catechetical instruction, and in fact constituted a Church controlled primary educational system. In accordance with the teaching of the Institutes the teachers

* Cp. Letters, II, 177, (writing to the Protector Somerset) "... if you desire to build an edifice which shall be of long duration, and which shall not soon fall into decay, make provision for the children being instructed in a good catechism..."

(along with the pastors, elders and deacons) were considered a distinct order of the Church, subject like the pastors to its discipline and like them regarded as recipients of a divine appointment. The duties of the teacher were more severely circumscribed than those of the pastor, but equal care was taken in his appointment. Had Calvin had his way teachers would have been appointed by the Church, but the Council relegated to itself the authority to examine and chose them. It likewise paid their stipends though some of the proceeds realised from the seizure of Catholic ecclesiastical property were used for this purpose. However, the work of the teachers remained under the supervision of the Church.

The reopening of the municipal school after Calvin's return in 1541 did not by any means solve the educational problem. It appears from a letter to Bullinger in 1542 that the attendance was discouragingly small, the stipends insufficient, and the Council willing but unable to better conditions.* In fact, in 1545, we learn that the school was closed and the scholars scattered, partly due to the ravages of the plague, and partly to the meagre financial support given by the Council.** Calvin laboured for the reestablishment of the school and kept at the Council until in 1558 that body appointed a committee to arrange for the site and building of an Academy. The money was raised with the greatest difficulty, but with a large measure of popular support and enthusiasm. Even the poor gave their bit that their city might be

* Letters, I, 339.

** Letters, II, 10.

the proud possessor of a college. Hence it was with great acclaim that the inaugural ceremonies of the Academy were held in the Cathedral of Saint-Pierre on the 5th of June, 1559, in the presence of councillors, professors, regents and students. Suffice it to briefly indicate its purpose and significance as far as these concern our subject.*

In the first place the establishment of the University was the direct result of the insistent proddings of the Church, and particularly of Calvin himself, for it was Calvin's personal conviction that the development of a well-trained ministry was essential if the new Church endure. It is important also to notice that the University and other schools were in large measure under the control of the Church.** It is true that stipends were paid by the State, and that the appointment of professors by the Venerable Company was subject to the approval of the Council, as were also the regulations of the University. However, the general supervision of the work remained in the hands of the Church. Detailed regulations were laid down regarding the character as well as the intelligence of teachers; devotional exercises were held the first hour of each morning, and at the close of the day's work, while on Wednesdays students and professors joined in the public worship of the Church. Subscription to the Genevan confession of faith was required of all students.

* An elaborate description of the foundation, course of study, faculty and subsequent history of this young Reformed University is to be found in Borgeaud's "Histoire de l'Université de Genève" (Geneva, 1900). For an account in English cp. Reyburn, chapter XVI, Walker, 350-367.

** The Consistory even performed the duties of truant officers.

Calvin sought to attract to Geneva the leading intellects of the day, sufficient evidence of his desire to reward learning and religion. Due to the dispersal of the College of Lausanne he was able to secure instructors of high standing for the work in Geneva. Among these were François Berauld, professor of Greek, Antoine Chevalier, professor of Hebrew, Jean Tagaut, professor of philosophy, with Beza as rector and Calvin himself at the head of the theological department. Emmanuel Tremelli, learned professor at Heidelberg, had refused the professorship of Hebrew, and Calvin was also unsuccessful in an attempt to secure the services of Mercer. In addition to the Academy there was also an elementary school for children in which chief emphasis was placed upon the study of languages. The work of the Academy proper included lessons in theology, dialectic, rhetoric, physics, mathematics, Hebrew, Greek, ethics and literature. Subsequently departments of medicine and law were added. The instruction was free.

On the occasion of the opening of the Academy the magistracy issued the following proclamation: "It is by the great mercy and grace of God that it has been given to this town to become at once the foster-mother of piety and science."* Such a tribute could more properly have been applied to the Genevan Church itself, for it furnished the inspiration and guidance in both activities. Geneva quickly became the training center of Protestantism, and the Academy took place alongside the Institutes as the agency through which Calvin's teaching and the Reformed faith penetrated

* Quoted, Penning, 290.

Holland, England, Scotland, Germany, Switzerland, and especially France. Students flocked from all Western Europe. The enrolment the first year was 162, largely from France, but at Calvin's death, five years later, there were 1200 in the college and 300 in the elementary school, a total of 1500 students in a city which numbered only 16,000!* The Academy sent out literally hundreds of trained ministers to carry the Gospel to all lands.

The results of this undertaking were simply immeasurable. It impressed upon the Reformed Church of all lands the ideal of a well-educated ministry. The ignorance of the Roman clergy had been a byword, and no taunt of Calvin against the Council of Trent was more stinging than his assertion that after all the bishops were but "dull and unlearned" men. Hence the Catholic clergy were not calculated to command respect, much less win men to the faith. Against such a contingency Calvin struggled with all the power of his mighty intellect. No one can estimate the extent to which his ideal of a trained ministry has imprinted itself upon other branches of the Church and indirectly upon the rank and file of society as well.

The Genevan Academy presented an ideal of Christian education which the Church and Christian princes in other lands were soon to imitate. It furnished the example of the Church itself taking the initiative in the establishment of popular, free education. What the Academy had been to Geneva, the University of Leyden

* Reyburn, 286. On the role of the Academy's students appear the names of Kaspar Olevianus, one of the authors of the Heidelberg Catechism, and Thomas Bodley, founder of the famous library at Oxford. (Walker, 366).

became to the Reformed Church of Holland, and the University of Edinburgh to Scotland; while at a later date the Puritans of a New World founded Yale, Harvard and Princeton and a score of other colleges. Geneva was not only the training school for future leaders of liberty in every nation of Europe; it was itself the mother of universities.

Christian education, a trained ministry, the religious education of the young, - all these Calvin regarded as divinely appointed tasks of the Church. Certain it is that he has deserved the respect of the world by the determination with which he carried out this conviction in the Church and Academy at Geneva. The task of fostering education, which has now in Western lands been almost entirely entrusted to the State, does not even yet relieve the Church of its responsibility to lead in the religious education of the country's youth, to insist on a trained ministry, and to insure that science and religion continue as partners in the quest for truth. For Calvin school and Church marched hand in hand for the enlightenment, development and progressive sanctification of the Christian community. That this ideal was stamped upon the new Church at its formative period is most significant. Western civilisation owes a debt of gratitude to the Reformer who regarded learning and faith as bound by an indissoluble tie.

The Institutes reveal the greatest thinker of the age with every faculty of his well-trained intellect centered on the task of writing an apologetic of the new faith. They indicate also that

Calvin recognised a certain worth in knowledge per se, and a "common grace" which finds expression in everything which God has created. An innate passion for truth characterises the human mind, and in the natural realm even the unconverted reach knowledge which to despise would be to insult the Spirit of God, Who is the "only fountain of truth."* Yet coupled with this appreciation of the wonder of man's intellect there exists the conviction that the intellect reaches its true goal only when it is consecrated to and directed by God. So is earthly wisdom trained to divine ends.

Calvin's early Humanistic training bore rich and unexpected varieties of fruit. He had drunk deeply of the Biblical Humanism of Le Fèvre, and had been thoroughly trained in the classics, in languages and law at the Universities of Paris and Orleans. "For Calvin Humanistic culture was not only the candlestick upon which the light of the Gospel stands, but its spirit blended, in spite of a strong Biblicism, in a certain harmony with the Gospel. Education and religion, culture and morality go hand in hand. This union ... Calvin truly achieved."** Such a union enabled him the more easily to attract the educated classes, and impressed the religious thought of the Reformed faith with the seal of intellectual integrity; and it was such a union which rendered the Reformed faith itself more congenial to the modern age.

* Inst. II, ii, 14 ff.

** Seeberg, 558, 629. On Calvin and Humanism see Neuenhaus, "Calvinstudien."

It is a wider and more uncertain question as to the ultimate influence of Calvinism in ushering in the modern era because of its educational policy.* That the social transformation due to the development of popular education has its first roots in Protestantism is doubtless true, but that there is a distinct cause and effect connection between the two is problematical. Troeltsch maintains that even under the Reformation education was largely confined to the learned professions, was predominantly Latin and non-popular, resulting in a further social cleavage between the educated and uneducated, and was in the main directed toward religious education and nominal literacy. This judgment is, however, less true of Calvinism than of Protestantism in general, for Calvin's aim, in a remarkable degree realised, was to foster a universal, free compulsory educational system which should afford the young not only religious instruction but also a good grounding in the languages, sciences and arts as well. Moreover, Protestantism did much toward the development of a spirit of historical criticism and a restless search for truth, a spirit which helped to break the fetters of mediaevalism and bore fruit in the philosophical and scientific researches of a later age.** And in the genesis of this movement the Genevan Church took no small part, for it consciously set for itself the goal of a thoroughly trained ministry and an intelligent citizenry.

* Troeltsch, "P. and F." 145-170, esp. 146 f.

** As Troeltsch avers: Protestantism "encouraged exact thinking and scholarly study. It thus established the principle of clearness of thought and conscious reflectiveness; and from religion as a center, that spread to other matters." Ibid. 157.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CHURCH AND THE ECONOMIC SPHERE

In considering the vocation of the Church it is not usual to seek to determine the interaction of religious and economic factors, nor to discover what ideals, if any, the Church has or should have for realisation in the economic sphere. Yet it is well to remember that it was a lowly Carpenter Who revealed God to men, that of the little group of men who composed the nucleus of the first Church the majority were working-men, and that as a fact of history economic and religious ideals have been closely intertwined. At times the two spheres have been united in an unholy alliance; at times because of mutual suspicion, separated, lest commercial life be unduly meddled with or religion become contaminated; at times they have been mutually helpful, advancing hand in hand.

It were altogether beside the point to insist that Calvin consciously set before the eyes of the Church goals which it should realise in the economic sphere. He did not; he was first and last a religious Reformer. The ideals which he as a minister of the Church projected into the periphery of the religious life were not so much conscious as incidental, being rather the fruitage of his theology, ethic and life rooted in the doctrine of the all-

embracing sovereignty of God. Yet Protestantism, and Calvinism in particular, did give moral sanction to economic life, and as such the subject must fall within the bounds of the present discussion.

We have previously traced Calvin's attitude toward the present world. To briefly recapitulate: his was a piety which would use the world without abusing it, which refused to regard the world as an end per se, yet willingly, even eagerly strove to employ the present life as a gift of God to be devoted to His service; a piety which longed for the world to come without hating the present life, a telic-oriented intramundane activity which would measure this life by the standard of the next, which would overcome the world by bringing the whole of life under the sway of the Master, which would refashion it according to the will of God expressed in Scripture. His was a piety which denounced mediaeval monastic ideals of deliberate withdrawal from the world, yet equally abhorred the timid separatism of the sects and the carnal intemperance of the Libertines. In it there was a powerful admixture of inherent conservatism, respect for authority, submission to all conditions of life as willed by God, along with a restless, active intolerance of everything not in accord with the divine will explicit in the Bible. It mattered little whether the Church had definite ideals for the economic sphere. A Church which produces this type of piety will sooner or later burst its bounds and refuse to rest satisfied till all of life is captured for God. An understanding of the nature of this piety is the sine qua non of any

proper evaluation of the influence of Calvinism in various spheres of life. Many explanations have been offered to account for the very apparent congeniality of Calvinism with the industrial and commercial development of the modern world. We are convinced that the secret of such a congeniality is primarily to be found in Calvin's piety.

Max Weber and Ernst Troeltsch are the pioneers in the attempt to trace the genesis of the economic ethic of Calvinism.* Weber was the original enunciator of the thesis that the spirit of capitalism finds its source in the religious ideals of Calvinism. Troeltsch, accepting the results of his colleague both in regard, ^{to this} and with reference to the theory of intramundane asceticism, has used them to support his thesis that the Reformation is in spirit substantially at one with the Middle Ages. The latter thesis has attracted so much attention to its author that for the most part sight has been lost of the fact that Weber was the original enunciator of the theory regarding the intramundane asceticism of Calvinism and the emergence of the modern economic order from its religious piety.

* Max Weber, "Die Protestantische Ethik und der Geist/des Kapitalismus" in "Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik." Vol. xx and xxi; Cp. P. T. Forsyth's article in English (based on one by Professor Weber) in "The Contemporary Review," Vol. xcvi, pp. 726-741; Troeltsch, "P. and F." 128-141 and "Soziallehren," 704-722. It is unfortunate that Troeltsch's thesis, which contains so much of real value, should be in imminent danger of being ground to powder between the millstones of an outraged Lutheran chauvinism and an equally offended hero-worshipping Calvinism. Yet by the unfortunate use of such terms as "intramundane asceticism" and "capitalistic spirit", and his tendency to blind his eyes to the weakness of primitive Anabaptism, Troeltsch lays himself open to much criticism. While no one maintains that the modern age was born full-grown at the Reformation, it savours of a preconceived thesis to assert that Protestantism is merely another cog in the wheel of mediaevalism.

Weber, the economist, became convinced that the capitalistic spirit so characteristic of our modern order could not have arisen of itself. Being struck by the fact that industrial and commercial life has flourished to best advantage on Calvinistic soil, he concluded that some inner connection must have existed between its development and the ethico-religious spirit of Calvinism. The secret of such a connection he discovered in the intramundane asceticism which he believes characterises Calvinism, in its teaching regarding vocation, in its emphasis on restless activity as a proof of election, and in its desire to refashion all according to God's pattern in Scripture. Such forces served to develop the spirit of productivity, or as Weber styles it, the spirit of capitalism. Let us briefly examine these sources.

Let it first be understood that by the "capitalistic spirit" Weber does not mean capitalism as we know it to-day. His is an unfortunate choice of words, for there is little in common between self-centered capitalism and the non-hedonistic economic attitude of primitive Calvinism. What Weber really means by the term is rather the spirit of incessant activity, fully controlled, which does not set pleasure or self-indulgence as its goal, but rather productivity for its own sake. It is this spirit which constitutes the psychological basis of capitalism, a spirit without which capitalism could not have developed. Had Weber called it the spirit of productivity, his central idea would have been conserved without burdening the mind with the unfortunate connotation of the word "capitalistic." Hence when the term "capitalistic spirit" is used

we shall do well to divest our minds of all the excesses to which capitalism has led, and to think more specifically of the ethico-religious spirit of productivity which rendered possible the development of the modern economic system.

This spirit is not a mere expression of the acquisitive instinct, nor is it called into being by the simple necessity of providing for bare physical subsistence. In fact, Weber asserts, it goes far beyond this, and may even be opposed to this. A religious basis is necessary to render men eager to subdue and overcome the world, and to inculcate in them the duty of incessant untiring activity and production as ends in themselves.* The spirit of productivity runs counter to certain of man's natural impulses, and its rise can only be accounted for by the fact that it is deeply rooted in an ethico-religious foundation, which foundation Weber concludes is discoverable in the piety of Calvinism.

Weber begins his discussion by a contrast between the mediaeval and Reformed attitudes toward the present life, the former being that of an extramundane, the latter an intramundane asceticism. Inasmuch as this aspect of the subject has been dealt with above,** we shall pass on to the ethic of vocation. The mediaeval Church

* One must demur at the wording of this statement. Though later Puritanism did consider productivity as obligatory for its own sake, primitive Calvinism was not guilty of this. It envisaged productivity for God's sake, and the economic sphere as simply another portion of the stage whereon must be wrought out the will of God.

** Chapter III. The same objection applies both to his use of the term "intramundane asceticism" and the "capitalistic spirit." Weber regards the former as the distinctive note of the Calvinistic piety, and as the basis of its economic ethic. Without assenting to the

had ordinarily regarded human labour as a necessary evil consequent to the fall of man, only to reach its proper goal when carried on under the direction and blessing of the Church, in short as a burden to be borne rather than a task to rejoice in. The Reformers turned with loathing from the monastic asceticism of the Middle Ages with its double standard for monk and layman, religious and secular. The Church is in the world; work is a divine service, not a mere punishment for disobedience. Protestantism not only freed the ethic of work from its monastic and ascetic accretions; it regarded human labour as divinely ordained, a means by which the work of grace may find expression. The ethic of vocation took on a vital meaning, assuming the aspect of religious duty.

It was Luther who first emancipated Protestantism and gave to it the ethic of vocation, a word which assumes a rich meaning in the history of modern life. Yet in this regard Luther's work was negative rather than positive. Ernst Troeltsch reminds us that Luther's ethic of the secular calling is not in itself "the Christian justification of industrial life," that Luther simply divests of its abuses the mediaeval conception of the calling. His conservatism and the secularisation of ecclesiastical property led to a marked increase in the power and wealth of the German princes "and thus facilitated the adoption by the government of a rational eco-

use of the above appellation, the cause and effect connection between the Calvinistic piety and the development of the commercial and industrial life is perfectly sound. But why needlessly clog the mind with expressions extraneous to the ideas which they are designed to convey? The spirit of productivity would be the better term for the one, and for the other the awkward but certainly more accurate phrase, Bibliocentric intramundane activity for the glory of God.

conomic policy." Yet Luther's principle did not transgress the prevailing class system, but rather simply proclaimed the duty of Christian men to produce the necessities of life and passively to submit to all injustice which does not interfere with the proclamation of the true word and the administration of the sacraments. The economic influence of Lutheranism was confined to the development of a strong national government, the stimulation of agriculture and the handicrafts, and the production of a submissive labouring population.* It tended to meekly acquiesce in the status quo, and the ethic of vocation was not regarded as contributory to the building up of a Christian community and civilisation, but simply as a task appointed by God to be faithfully followed out.

Far different was the spirit of Calvinism. It adopted the Lutheran teaching regarding vocation, but suffused it with its own elixir of life. One's calling is not merely a life task assigned by Providence, to which one must submit; it is a divine service, a means by which the Christian may show his gratitude, may seek to accomplish God's will, and fashion life according to the divine purpose. It is a holy ministry; not submission, but ceaseless activity is its watchword. Not the individual only, but the Church and the State fill its horizon. The Christian's task is to master the world as God's steward. In place of the old mediaeval "world renunciation for God," he will practise "world mastery for God."**

* Tr. "F. and P." 128 ff., Cp. "Soziallehren" 653 ff., 704 ff.

** Forsyth, 731.

In common with Luther Calvin opposed monastic separatism. In fact he maintained that even in the early Church those taking monastic vows "were not without a degree of affectation and false zeal. It was a fine thing to cast away their substance, and free themselves from all worldly cares; but God sets more value on the pious management of a household, when the head of it, discarding all avarice, ambition, and other lusts of the flesh, makes it his purpose to serve God in some particular vocation. It is fine to philosophise in seclusion, far away from the intercourse of society, but it ill accords with Christian meekness, as if in hatred of the human race, to fly to the wilderness and to solitude, and at the same time desert the duties which the Lord has especially commanded."* Moreover, Calvin will not brook indolence, both from the point of view of the individual and of the Christian community. All we have in means or in intellectual, physical and spiritual ability is to be concentrated on the work of the Kingdom. Because of man's restlessness, fickleness, folly and rashness, God has assigned a distinct vocation to each man. "And that no one may presume to overstep his proper limits, He has distinguished the different modes of life by the names of callings. Every man's mode of life, therefore, is a kind of station assigned him by the Lord, that he may not be always driven about at random in everything the call of the Lord is the foundation and beginning of right action. He who does not act with reference to it will not in the discharge of duty, keep the right path he only who directs his life to this end will have

it properly framed; because, free from the impulse of rashness, he will not attempt more than his calling justifies, knowing that it is unlawful to overleap the prescribed bounds."*

On the surface the above statement might seem to commit Calvin to the identical conservatism of Luther. Yet as in the case of his teaching regarding absolute submission to the political powers that be, he also allows exceptions sufficient to so colour the whole as to develop a positive attitude toward the State, so in like manner his ethic of vocation is so suffused by his piety, especially the spirit of incessant activity for the glory of God, that it is delivered from such a negative outlook as Lutheranism presented. After all Calvin's primary concern in thus hedging about his teaching on vocation was not the perpetuation of the status quo either in the case of the individual or of the State, but, as he says, simply to guard against the "inconsiderate eagerness and restlessness" opposed to a peaceable mind.**

There is comfort, almost tenderness, in the words with which Calvin concludes his discussion of vocation (for there is tenderness as well as severity in the Reformer) ... "in all our cares, toils, annoyances, and other burdens, it will be no small alleviation to know that all these are under the superintendence of God, Every one in his particular mode of life will, without repining, suffer its inconveniences, cares, uneasiness and anxiety, persuaded

* Ibid. III, x, 6.

** Commentaries, "I. Cor." vii:20.

that God has laid on the burden. This, too, will afford admirable consolation, that in following your proper calling, no work will be so mean and sordid as not to have a splendour and value in the eye of God."* This closing sentence suggests that Calvin will not merely echo the passive conservatism of Luther. The very fact that as it were he lifts up each calling, each worker into the presence of God, is indicative that he regards the believer's vocation not merely as a divine appointment in which he is to meekly acquiesce, but as a task to be done cheerfully and hopefully in the consciousness of God's will and presence. For the believer it is only a step from this to the query: how can I bring this calling of mine into closest accord with the will of God as I find that will expressed in Scripture, until life becomes (as it was with Calvin) incessant activity for the glory of the sovereign God, and for the ends of His Church and Kingdom.

Both Weber and Troeltsch recognise the key position of the doctrine of predestination in the development of the Calvinistic economic ethic. There was no uncertain note in Calvin's proclamation of this doctrine. What proof has the believer of his election? To be in constant doubt about its reality and to inquire unduly into the eternal recesses of the divine wisdom is to render him constantly miserable, to disturb his conscience and deprive it of peace and tranquillity, an attitude which shipwrecks the soul.**

* Inst. III, x, 6.

** Inst. III, xxiv, 3 ff.

In order that the believer may be rescued from deadly self-introspection, and in order that he may be certain of his election Calvin points him primarily to Christ ("elected in Him"), to the word of God, and "to those posterior signs which are sure attestations" of election. The evidence of saving faith is found in good works. The gift of good works like "rays of the divine countenance shows that we have received the spirit of adoption."* Good works are the fruit of salvation to be judged a posteriori as a sign of the effectual calling of God.

Nor need the true believer fear that God will not give him grace to persevere, "since the Son of God, Who asks that their piety may prove constant, never meets with a refusal."** As the sins of the past have been forgiven, all fear and dread as to the future is likewise removed. He is a free man! He is delivered once and for all time from anxious forebodings as to his own subjectivistic emotions. Has not God promised? Is not this sufficient? The entire spiritual nature is free to devote itself to the service of God. His progressive sanctification is likewise included in the original decrees, and is to be worked out, not in the loneliness of the cloister, but in the daily round of duties, in the shop, on the farm, in the home.

* Ibid. xiv, 18. "Our salvation is certain because it is in the hands of God." Commentaries, "John," x, 28. Cp. "John," vi, 37. "How wide the difference between the two things, between ceasing from well-doing because election is sufficient for salvation, and its being the very end of election, that we should devote ourselves to the study of good works." Inst. III, xxiii, 12.

** Inst. III, xxiv, 6. As the Reformer with some asperity remarks anent those who maintain that "the knowledge of final perseverance still remains in suspense,) An admirable security, indeed, is left us, if, for the present moment only, we can judge from moral con-

As a matter of fact the believer's confidence in his election by God normally moves him not to pride, but to humility, not to self-satisfied, smug complacency, but to ceaseless activity for others, not to supine submission, but to holy intolerance of all not in accord with the word of God, not to a species of passive quietism, but to a glorious campaign for the Kingdom. Such has in the main been the dominant note of Calvinism. It is this virile doctrinal basis which releases the Calvinist to focus all his energy on God's tasks. Religious surety opens the valve of moral energy. No emphasis is placed upon the subjectivistic experiences of the believer, as Lutheranism tended to do, for the Calvinist's attention is directed to an objective ideal above and beyond himself, the ideal of a life lived all for God and none for self, all for the glory of God and the work of His Kingdom, with no time for pious, emotional dissipation. Made conscious of his election by the work he is enabled to do for God, he forgets himself, and strives to master the world for God.* With sources of power such as these at the basis of its religious and ethical endeavour, is it any wonder that Calvinism found such an abundant outlet for its energies in the social, political and economic spheres? Calvin restated and impressed upon the life of the Reformation the Pauline sequence of election, faith, salvation and absolute abandonment to the service of men and the glory of God.

jecture that we are in grace, but know not how we are to be tomorrow! Very different is the language of the Apostle (Romans, viii, 38)." Ibid. II, 40.

* "Life becomes the expression of an elect destiny, vocation not an acquiescence but a conquest, faith not a mere reliance, but an energy." Forsyth, 733. Cp. Tr. "Soziallehren" 618 f., 623 ff.

However, the undoubted potency of doctrinal elements in promoting the rapprochement between the Calvinistic Church and the economic sphere should not blind us to the part played by the circumstances of Genevan life. The situation in Germany made it quite feasible for Lutheranism to keep to the predominantly "agrarian-patriarchal" scheme of life. Commercial and economic development **was** not yet a necessity and it was natural for a prevalingly conservative religious system to adapt itself to conditions as it found them. Not so Calvinism, for Geneva of necessity had to take **a**ccount of the industrial life as well as the agrarian. If nothing else, the mere fact of its geographical location made this obligatory. It was only a small municipality hemmed in on three sides by powerful and for the most part hostile nations. Possessing as it did so little territory it was forced to turn to industrial pursuits or else succumb. Hence it need not surprise us to find laws regulating usury and recognising the legitimacy of interest even a century and a half before Calvin.

The really significant point is that Calvin found it possible to enter sympathetically into the circumstances in which he found the little city. This was doubtless due partly to the fact that he was a jurist and a statesman rather than a monk like Luther, partly to the realisation that in Geneva as a practical matter no other course seemed possible. But far and away the most important reason was Calvin's own piety, as has been indicated above. It is true that had Geneva **been** a large industrial and commercial city

Calvin would have found it extremely difficult to have accommodated himself to such conditions, but the narrow compass of Genevan economic interests and the close alliance of Church and State enabled him to fit in the scheme with his own ethico-religious point of view. As Troeltsch observes, the significant fact is that Calvin "resigned himself to this necessity without scruples and difficulties,"* an attitude which Luther doubtless could never have taken. This is an admission on Troeltsch's part that the Genevan circumstances alone cannot account for Calvin's favourable outlook on economic pursuits. In fact the conviction is inescapable that Troeltsch gives undue prominence to the influence of the Genevan cultural background upon Calvin. Under the general heading of this influence he notes three important matters: the economic ethic, the democratic-constitutional bias and the international outlook of Calvinism. Of course it is foolish to deny that Geneva influenced Calvin. The city undoubtedly presented a unique center into which he could bring his "new Jerusalem" to a more complete realisation than would have been possible in any other place. Yet Calvin's insistence on the sovereignty of God, his piety in its relationship to the present life, and above all his supreme desire to see all life governed by the standard of God's word for His glory - without these influences we can conceive of Geneva having become a politico-religious center like Bern or even a commercial Lyons, but never could it have become the birthplace of the Puritan economic ethic, the center of Western religious piety, the inspirer

* Tr. "Soziallehren", 707.

of democratic thought, the power house of Protestantism. Geneva and Calvin were complimentary forces. Even to-day we can scarcely think of the one apart from the other, but of the two no candid observer will doubt which exerted the more determining creative influence.

Troeltsch indicates another factor in the development of the industrial spirit among early Calvinists in the fact that in most countries they formed only comparatively small and persecuted minorities. As such they were not admitted to public life or civil service and were perforce driven to a predominantly commercial existence. This was notably true among the Huguenots of France and the early Puritans of England and Holland. Their ethical and religious background enabled them to fit in with the conditions forced upon them, thus aiding most materially in the development of the industrial and commercial life of these countries.* Yet we must bear in mind that this condition is not integral to the Calvinistic economic ethic, for the latter reached an early, fairly complete development in Geneva where Calvinism was the dominant force.

* It is well to temper any tendency toward Calvinistic chauvinism in this regard by the realisation of the truth of the following statement: "That Calvinism has been also a contributing factor in the economic growth of Holland, England and France is even so little to be overlooked as that it is certain where natural preliminary conditions were lacking, as in Poland or Hungary, such fruits were not produced." Seeberg, 633. It has also been suggested that the Calvinistic economic attitude has been influenced by Judaism. This is mentioned by Weber, but it is Sombart ("Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben") who traces the economic ethic of Calvinism to its close spiritual affinity with Judaism, particularly the ethical teachings of the Old Testament, of which Calvin made such copious use. It is impossible to discuss the matter here; suffice it to say with Troeltsch that there is a wide difference between the trade and money-lending which characterises Jewish capitalism, and the civic and industrial economics of modern life. Tr., "P. and P." Note, p. 141.

Calvinism likewise made a contribution in that it did away with what has so well been termed the "pedantic prohibitions" of mediaevalism. In the Middle Ages mercantile life had been viewed askance by the Church. The taking of interest had been forbidden because of the Scriptural passages condemning usury and on account of a conviction as to the unproductive nature of money. With the single exception of Calvin this view was retained by the Reformers. It is said of Luther that he "attacks finance and credit, and in particular wholesale trade, as passionately as any mediaeval author*."

In corroboration of what we might expect from the Calvinistic piety, we find the Reformer keenly interested in and concerned about the economic sphere. Not only did he help to deliver men from the "pedantic prohibitions" which had been cast about the commercial life by the mediaeval Church, but he gave religious sanction to economic life. He recognised the taking of interest (within bounds) as quite legitimate, and even went so far as to admit that money and credit are inherently productive. It should, however, be remembered that Calvin's espousal of the legitimacy of usury (in the sense of a fair rate of interest, the original meaning of the term) was in no sense a break with Genevan custom. A century and a half before Calvin in the Genevan Franchises of 1387 four articles were inserted recognising the legitimacy of interest.** Yet in spite of this civil sanction of usury wrested by the burghers from the Roman bishop, the practise was still

* Tr., "F. and P." 130; Bavinck, 123, 128. However, the mediaeval Church did countenance rent-charges and business partnerships.

** Viz., articles 34, 35, 39, 77, v. Foster, "Am. Hist. Rev." 220.

well-nigh universally condemned by the Church. The fact that Geneva officially favoured it may have rendered it easier for Calvin to recognise its legitimacy. Yet in face of the almost unanimous opposition of the Reformers to the practise there is certainly insufficient evidence to accord Calvin's attitude to the influence of Genevan circumstances alone rather than to his own convictions. In any case Calvin clothed the practise with religious sanction and justified it on the basis of Christian liberty.

Calvin's teaching on usury is well-known. Briefly, he argues that the prohibition was enjoined in Old Testament times because the circumstances of the Jews rendered unnecessary the taking of usury. Inasmuch as men now live under different conditions they should merely seek to avoid the extremes of usury rather than to taboo it altogether. To do the latter is to bind men in closer bounds than the Lord has done in His word, a practise always dangerous. It is admissible that money as well as houses or lands should bring in its return. Only excessive usury is to be condemned. "The gain which he who lends his money upon interest acquires, without doing injury to anyone, is not to be included under the head of unlawful usury."*

* Commentaries, "Psalms" xv, 5. Cp. Calvin "De Usuris," also Letters, IV, 252 f., where he asserts that as to the taking of usury by ministers, "to condemn absolutely such a manner of lending would be an instance of too great rigour ... I dare not assert that it is not lawful ... The safest and most expedient conduct would be not to engage in such practises or contracts. But as this practise is more supportable than pursuing mercantile speculations, or conducting any traffic by which he might be diverted from his functions, I see no reason why the thing should be condemned in general." Cp. Tr., "Soziallehren," 719 ff. Calvin thus

Yet if Calvin freed the Christian from the too rigorous ban of the Middle Ages on usury, he was equally zealous in sedulously guarding the practise from its inherent excesses. Whereas he gives but a halting (at times almost innocuous) approval to the taking of interest, his chief concern is to curb its extremes. "Let them not imagine anything can be lawful to them (usurers) which is grievous and hurtful to others It is also a very strange and shameful thing that while all other men obtain the means of their subsistence with much toil, while husbandmen fatigue themselves by their daily occupations and artisans serve the community by the sweat of their brow, and merchants not only employ themselves in labour, but also expose themselves to many inconveniences and dangers, that money-mongers should sit at their ease without doing anything and receive tribute from the labour of all other people."*

outlines the conditions under which usury is legitimate: " 1. Money must not be lent to a poor man in such a way, that if he fall into misfortune he may be compelled to pay a yearly interest. 2. He who lends must not have mere gain in view. 3. Justice must never be forgotten, nor Christ's precept, 'Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you.' 4. He who receives the money must gain as much or more from it. 5. Our decision as to the justice of the proceeding must be according to the word of God, and not according to human notions. 6. We must have respect also to the good of the place in which we reside. 7. The legal interest in our country must not be exceeded." (Quoted Henry, I, 469, Note 3.) The above quotation is eloquent of the manner in which the Reformer suffused even the commercial sphere with the spirit of his faith.

* Commentaries, "Psalms," xv, 5. Cp. also Tracts Vol. I, 264. Sec. 14, where Calvin reveals himself as at one with the other Reformers in his opposition to the excessive usury of the Jews.

Calvin was the bitter enemy of all extortion, fraud and unjust bargaining. The Council and Consistorial minutes are cluttered with innumerable cases in which it was sought to defend the poor from extortion and to curb the excesses of money-lenders. Mediaeval or modern Shylocks would have received scant mercy in Geneva. It is significant that Calvin was able to divest his mind of the abuses of usury and to recognise the legitimacy of a fair rate of interest.

The Reformer was likewise a consistent upholder of the dignity of human labour, regarding it as a divine service. He was very outspoken in his denunciation of such Romanists as regarded it "immeasurably more wicked ... to have put their hand to honest labour on a day consecrated to some one or other of their saintlings, than to have constantly employed^{all} their members in the greatest crimes."* He clinched his argument against monasticism by deprecating the tendency to prefer ascetic solitude to the homely duties which the Lord commands.** In line with such sentiments he was most insistent that religious duties should not unduly overshadow the daily task. On extraordinary occasions of public prayer in Geneva "the shops were shut in the morning, and every one returned to his several calling after dinner."*** One day a week was ordinarily set apart as a day of prayer "as necessity and the exigencies of the times should require ... But we carry on our usual

* Inst. IV, x, 10.

** Ibid. xiii, 16.

*** Letters, II, 274.

labours on that day The most feasible means ... seemed to be to keep the holy day in the morning, and open the shops in the afternoon."*

Supplanting his negative condemnation of the ascetic and monastic contempt for the ordinary routine of economic and commercial life, we can easily trace in Calvin the emergence of a positive, practical outlook. Such is inherent in his attitude toward the present world (See Ch. III) in which he finds a revelation of God. True, he recognises the corruption which sin has brought into the world, but to him the every-day task takes on a divine radiance as it aids in the removal of this curse. The world is no pariah! "Certainly ivory, gold and riches are the good creatures of God, permitted, nay destined, by divine providence for the use of man; nor was it ever forbidden to ... add new to old and hereditary possessions."** In fact one of the objects of civil government is "that every man's property be kept secure, that men may carry on innocent commerce with each other."*** Calvin recognised the legitimacy of the mercantile and commercial life as a vocation approved by God and useful to the community. In itself this calling must not be condemned for it is "useful and necessary to the commonwealth."**** He is, however, by no

* Ibid. III, 164. It is instructive to note that in the Second Helvetic Confession written by Bullinger in 1566 parents are enjoined to bring up their children in the fear of the Lord, to provide for their support, and to teach them "artes honestas" or trades. (Chapter XXIX, Sec. 3. See Schaff, ^{Creeds} Vol. III, 304 f.) Such was the typical Calvinistic attitude.

** Inst. III, xix, 9.

*** Ibid. IV, xx, 3.

**** Commentaries, "Isaiah," xxiii, 15.

means blind to the dishonesty with which it frequently abounds, for he notes that all too often mercantile life implies "tricks, frauds, blandishments and flatteries of merchants, by which they impose on men."* He is especially averse to the practises of large commercial cities like Venice and Antwerp where the merchants exalt themselves to the level of princes. All of which serves to indicate that Calvin gives a limited but somewhat provisional imprimatur to the commercial calling, a significant advance, which however we must be careful not to construe as a full recognition of the modern economic order.

In line with this attitude Calvin upholds the idea that, within bounds, lawsuits are legitimate. While counselling equity, extreme moderation, forbearance, and charity, he maintains that these considerations need not prevent Christians "with entire friendship for their enemies, from using the aid of the magistrate for the preservation of their goods When one sees that his property, the want of which he would grievously feel, he is able, without any loss of charity, to defend, if he should do so, he offends in no respect against that passage of Paul ("I Cor." vi, 6),"** a teaching in itself of considerable moment, probably issuing from the juristic training and Humanistic tendencies of the Reformer.

* Ibid. verses 15-17.

** Inst. IV, xx, 20, 21; Cp. II, viii, 45, 46.

However, Calvin saw very clearly that neither poverty nor riches in themselves are the Christian's highest good. Neither extreme asceticism nor brazen worldliness is a worthy goal. When Christ commanded the young ruler to part with all his possessions if he would follow his Master, this injunction was never meant to have the universal application that "the perfection of man consists in the abandonment of his goods ... When Christ orders a rich miser to leave all that he has, it is the same as if he had ordered the ambitious to renounce all his honours, the voluptuous all his luxuries, the unchaste all the instruments of his lust."* Much less may the Christian fittingly struggle for wealth, honour, power and riches, at least when such prosperity is sought apart from God's blessing. In the pursuit of wealth "neither intellect nor labour will be of the least avail except in so far as the Lord prospers both." Prosperity gained by wiles, wicked arts and injury to others without God's blessing brings only misery and calamity to ourselves and others.** Calvin shrewdly opines that if an individual exhibits impatience in poverty he will with wealth display pride. The true Christian will practise moderation, recognising that created things afford us a revelation of God, and hence equally beware of false penuriousness and unrestrained indulgence.***

* Ibid. IV, xiii, 13.

** Ibid. III, vii, 8, 9.

*** Ibid. III, x, 3-5.

Moreover, the servants of the Church, particularly the ministers, are to set an example of honest labour and self-forgetful service. Calvin lived a life of self-denial and self-sacrifice which reduced him to comparative poverty. Much of what little he had he gave to help others, and at his death he left a mere pittance. If he required an industrious and sober life on the part of the layman, he insisted on an even higher standard for the pastor. A Church which is itself a den of thieves can scarcely expect to have any influence in the Christianisation of life.

We find Calvin's economic ethic exemplified not only in general teaching but also in specific practise. His correspondence is marked by countless references to economic and commercial interests revealing a sympathetic and intelligent knowledge of this sphere. By 1544, due to the plague, political unrest and the meagerly developed commercial life of the city, poverty and unemployment had reached alarming proportions. Calvin realised that charity was a poor solution of the problem, and that industry of some type must be organised. It was at his suggestion and according to plans which he himself drew up, that the Council took the matter in hand, appropriated State funds and founded a cloth and velvet factory. Such a procedure would have been quite alien to the spirit of the other Reformers, but Calvin's ethico-religious attitude made it comparatively easy for him to accommodate himself to the demands of the Genevan situation.

The interest of Calvin and the Genevan authorities ran down the whole gamut of Genevan commercial and economic life. True, even before Calvin the Council seems to have had some conscience along these lines, forbidding begging and guarding against vagabonds and spendthrifts, but such regulations met with only a grudging compliance. Calvin was needed to breathe a sterner note of enforcement into both old and new laws. It is inadvisable here to give a detailed account of the subjects dealt with.* Suffice it to say that in accord with Calvin's well-known detestation of unjust bargaining a price regulation system was introduced, also the inspection of market supplies, the establishment of a home for the indigent, while the strictest watch was kept over would-be profiteers. It was also in direct agreement with the spirit and example of Calvin that at a later date Beza and the Venerable Company (the council of ministers and teachers) constantly interested themselves in such subjects as the fixation of a legal maximum rate of interest, taxation, provision for the poor and unemployed, state loans, advance of cheap credit to worthy concerns and even the establishment of a State Bank.** While Calvin's excursion into this sphere afford no detailed system of economics, his attitude as the leader of the Reformed Church is most important.

* v. A. M. Hunter, Chapter XIV; Reyburn, Chapter XX and Foster, "Am. Hist. Rev." As Hunter observes: "They were pitiless towards the merchant who defrauded his customers, towards the manufacturer of velvet who made his stuff narrow by an inch, towards those who gave short measure of coal by constructing with cords the baskets in which it was sold. They brought to book the tailor who overcharged English exiles, the surgeon who demanded extortionate fees, the butcher who charged more for his meat than the appointed price." p. 265.

** Tr. "Soziallehren" p. 709.

It is apparent that Calvin was very careful to throw safeguards about the economic spirit lest it develop into a brazen, soulless, anti-Christian mammonism. In addition to the detailed restraints with which he surrounded the practise of usury and commercial establishments in Geneva, the specific character of the Calvinistic ethic was in itself the primal restraint. All earthly blessings are to be regarded as "given us by the kindness of God, and appointed for our use under the condition of being regarded as trusts, of which we must one day give account. We must, therefore, administer them as if we constantly heard the words sounding in our ears, 'give an account of your stewardship.' At the same time, let us remember by Whom the account is to be taken, viz., by Him Who, while He so highly commends abstinence, sobriety, frugality and moderation, abominates luxury, pride, ostentation and vanity; Who approves of no administration but that which is combined with charity"* Could any language more accurately mirror the New Testament teaching or stewardship? Men have eagerly welcomed Calvin's recognition of the Christian's right to enjoy this world's goods, but even the churches in which the Reformer is most honoured are still loath to regard wealth as a trust from God to be administered in His Spirit and under His guidance. Yet when men are truest to this Calvinistic interpretation of New Testament teaching they call naught their own, but all His to be used as His Spirit directs.

* Inst. III, x, 5.

The typical Calvinist was frugal, honest, hard-working. As generations passed, these traits, coupled with a hatred of luxury, pride and ostentation, issued in the keeping of expenditures down to an absolute minimum and hence to the accumulation of large stores of capital. This surplus in turn was less and less applied to the ends indicated by Calvin, but rather used for the further building up of capital and industry as ends per se. Naturally this was not visualised by the Reformer. The regulations he helped to draw up for Geneva were for but a small and comparatively insignificant commercial center. There is perhaps a modicum of truth in the criticism that Protestantism and Calvinism in particular is the source of that "nefarious doctrine, the pronouncement of private property." But if the ethic and rampant individualism of Calvinistic doctrine and piety seem calculated to produce the excesses of the capitalistic system, it must be recognised that the restraints Calvin insisted upon, such as the teaching on stewardship and his conception of the solidarity of the community, of the duty of all to each and each to all, with equal justice may be termed a precursor of Christian Socialism. It is significant that Calvinism is congenial with either system if its restraints are borne in mind.

Certainly hedonistic capitalism as an end per se is utterly alien to the primitive Calvinistic economic ethic. Also one must dissent from Troeltsch's too frequent and wide sweeping use of such epithets as "the capitalistic spirit" and "Christian Socialism," the former as applied to the spirit of productivity in the Calvin-

istic economic ethic, the latter to describe the paternalistic solicitude of the tiny Church-Republic for the least of its citizens.* In Geneva we stand near the beginnings of both movements, and both have in later years become so encrusted with materialistic and class distinctions as to bear almost no relation to Genevan sources. Through Troeltsch guards with numerous reservations his use of such terms, it is my conviction that to call by the name of asceticism an attitude which is not based on a hatred of the world but which is intramundane activity for the glory of God, capitalistic spirit, that which is not capitalism, or "Christian Socialism" that which is minus all class and materialistic connotations, that such usage is a hindrance rather than a help. But by whatever term we call it, in Geneva we do find a community in which citizens are envisaged as responsible for the spiritual and material welfare of each other. All life, whether it be that of the individual Christian, the Church, the magistracy, the factory, all is to be governed by Christian standards, and to be an intimate concern of the Christian Church. Christ is King as well as Saviour, and He would rule in all of life. As Troeltsch (following Choisy) observes, both State and spiritual authority are "responsible for the external welfare and ethical correction of every individual, the common answerability of the community for every member, even to the smallest detail of social reform.**

* Cp. Tr. "Soziallehren", 640-642, 676-678.

** Tr. "Soziallehren," 678 Note. Silvester Horne (p. 14) very properly remarks: "It will be well to decline firmly all temptation to work out a parallel between the Geneva of the 16th century and the socialist ideal of the 20th, but nobody ever held more

Modern capitalism serves, it is true, but serves for the glory of man, not for the sake of service nor for the glory of God, because service appears to pay dividends, not because it is right. Its benevolence is mere refined selfishness. Both Calvinism and capitalism are individualistic, but the latter lacks the religious and ethical anchor which held in check the early Calvinists and led them to be solicitous for the spiritual and physical welfare of one and all. A sense of common solidarity soon gave place to a frigid utilitarianism with its damning indifference to human need. Calvinistic individualism bears no more relation to the modern octopus of capitalism than a proper regard for the welfare of others does to the Reign of Terror.

However, an appreciation of Calvin's influence in the economic sphere must not blind us to essential principles. Calvin would not have a moment's patience with those who interpret history only along economic lines, nor with those who maintain that man's chief problem is the solution of economic questions, housing, waging, working conditions, sanitation, etc. He would be actively sympathetic toward the Christian solution of these problems, but he would never be swayed from his central conviction that the chief mission of the Church and of himself as a minister of God is to bring men to yield full loyalty to Christ as Saviour. He knew well enough that prosperity does not insure character any more than poverty inevitably breeds sin. The complete solution of man's economic difficulties can never be obtained apart from religious and ethical considerations.

definitely than Calvin the fundamental socialist principle that the individual has no rights against the State."

Solve all other problems (if there are those who imagine they can, without solving the fundamental issue of character and man's relationship to God) and the last state is almost as bad as the first*. For definite regulations and economic principles we need look for little enlightenment from Calvin, but inspiration and guidance may be found in his religious ethic, in his conviction of the communal responsibility of the Church, in his principle of stewardship, in his insistence on work for the glory of God and service of men, and in his earnest attempt to make the life of the community conform to the pattern of the word of God. Yet after all it were scant honour indeed if Calvinism be recognised as in some respects the parent of modern secular civilisation, for secularism is the chief foe of Christianity to-day. Rather should one rejoice in the Calvinistic piety which so far outlived all external forms as to have powerfully influenced all branches of the Church in its struggle for victory over the materialism of our day.

It may not unnaturally be asked what this spirit of productivity, this economic ethic has to do with the Church. Is not the piety of Calvinism but an outgrowth of the individualism of election? Does it not stress the duties of the individual elect, not of the Church? In a measure this is true. Yet the Church as the fellowship of the elect is also a unit in Calvin's thought, not of course in the sense that the Church stands between the individual and his God, but in the sense that there is an elect

* Seeberg is well justified in his warning against the tendency of Weber and Troeltsch to present Calvin as if for the Reformer "religion were entirely absorbed by ethic" - note, p.629. Cp. Leckie, 223 f.

community (nation or Church) as well as elect individuals.*

Not that in Calvin's thought community election for a moment displaces or overshadows individual election (as Ritschl mistakenly averred). Election is essentially individualistic, secondarily social. Yet not only the individual but the Christian community, both civil and religious, is an organ by and through which God's will is to be wrought out in all spheres of human life. The Church is under God not only the usual means through whose mediation this piety and spirit is produced in individuals; it is the spiritual storehouse which develops the organs through which this piety is to find adequate expression. It is, as in the political sphere, the informer of the conscience of the community; it is to insist on the sacredness of vocation as a service to God; it is to preach and practise the principle of stewardship; it is to apply the truth of God to the economic life of the community, and to use its influence to insure that this sphere of life conforms to the principles of God's word. Through its Consistory and Diaconate the Genevan Church took cognizance of the sins of its members in their capacity as merchants, farmers, manufacturers and money-lenders, and frankly spoke its mind in no uncertain voice.

The ideal was a noble one. There is of course danger that the Church may ignorantly meddle in secular affairs, but there is at least equal danger that business be ignorant of or indifferent to the spirit and principles of Christ, which it is the Church's

* Inst. III, xxi, 5, 6. Cp. Forsyth, 733 ff.

duty to proclaim. Lutheranism has for the most part been content to preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments. It has ever been suspicious of the social and political interests of the Reformed Church. Troeltsch remarks that with Lutheranism social heresies are regarded as more dangerous than dogmatic irregularities.* Lutheranism remains predominantly philosophical, even impractical, whereas Calvinism is essentially positive and virile. Therefrom issues much of the congeniality which Calvinism has with the modern order, for it will not shut its eyes to social and economic wrongs. It is to be hoped that this attitude of the early Reformed Church has once and for all crushed the selfish and reprehensible heresy that the Church must never interfere with external conditions lest it meddle with the decrees of Providence.

Refreshing it is to read the beautiful phrases of the liturgical forms of the Church of Geneva. Adopted under the auspices of Calvin, they in word and spirit reflect the mind of the Reformer. The written prayers touch well-nigh the whole range of human activity, and are indicative of the interest the Church took that all spheres of life might be brought under the control and guidance of the Lord. For example the following, "Prayer to be said before a man begins his work: O Lord God, most merciful Father and Saviour, seeing it has pleased Thee to command us to labour, we beseech Thee of Thy grace so to bless our work that Thy blessing may extend unto us, without which we are unable to continue strengthen

* Tr. "Soziallehren", 722. Through its ethic Calvinism "establishes a harmony with the modern economic world which is lacking to other peoples of Christendom." 720.

us with Thine Holy Spirit that we may faithfully labour in our lot and calling without fraud or deceit, and that we may endeavour ourselves to follow Thy holy will rather than to seek to satisfy our greedy affection or desire of gain. And if it please Thee, O Lord, to prosper our labour, give us a mind also to help them that have need according to that ability that Thou of Thy mercy shalt give us ..."* So likewise the simple yielding of the will to God's control in a "Prayer For The Morning". What a revolution we might expect if each labourer, each capitalist made this his daily prayer. "My God, my Father and Preserver, Who of Thy goodness hast watched over me during the past night, and brought me to this day, grant also that I may spend it wholly in the worship and service of Thy most holy deity. Let me not think, or say, or do a single thing which tends not to Thy service and submission to Thy will, that thus all my actions may aim at Thy glory, and the salvation of my brethren, while they are taught by my example to serve Thee To whatever purpose I apply my mind, may the end which I ever propose to myself be Thy honour and service ... Let me not attempt anything whatever that is not pleasing to Thee!"**

The every-day life of the people viewed in the light of the purpose of God, invigorated by the Christian's consciousness of God's election and guidance, inspired by the conviction that his vocation is a service of God, fired with a determination to overcome the world and fashion it according to God's revealed will,

* Quoted, A. M. Hunter, 216.

** Tracts, II, 95.

- this is the spirit which lay at the basis of the rapprochement between the Calvinistic Church and the economic sphere. Could the modern industrial order lay aside its paganism and reinstate on its former throne the ethico-religious basis which alone made its development possible, the world might yet witness the will of God as the guide of men in the sphere of life which to-day seems farthest removed from the principles and spirit of the Carpenter of Nazareth.

CONCLUSION

An unguarded gesture of the hand may be more expressive of a man's character and ideals than any carefully balanced formal statement could possibly be. It is reported by contemporaries that often while speaking Calvin with one hand reverently raised his biretta and with the long forefinger of the other pointed upwards, exclaiming "All for the honour of God." In fact so frequently did he use the gesture that even when the words were unspoken, his hearers understood.* How often the corridors of old Saint - Pierre's echoed to that phrase, until it became ingrained not only in the Genevan Church but was reechoed by the little groups of worshipping Huguenots huddled in some wayside barn, by the peasants and burghers of the Lowlands pitching their strength against the relentless legions of Catholic Spain, by the hunted Covenanters meeting in secret conventicles in the glens of the Highlands, by the cohorts of Old Ironsides. "All for the honour of God!" Calvin builded better than he knew, for he indelibly impressed upon the Reformed churches the type of piety that made them willing to dare to do and die for their God, and to promote His glory by rendering implicit obedience to His will. Such after all was the Reformer's chief contribution.

* Penning, 108 f.

It has unfortunately long been customary to fix upon the doctrine of predestination (usually double predestination) as the constitutive element of Calvinism. It has been taken as a truism that this is the key by which alone the mysteries of Reformed theology can be unlocked. But this is far from true of early Reformed theology as expounded by Calvin. Later critics and historians who have delved more deeply into the spirit of the Reformer challenge the assertion that double predestination is the primary or most essential element in Calvin's system of theology. They point out that only ordinary (single) predestination is referred to in the first edition of the Institutes, that the official teaching of the Genevan Church as stated in its revised Catechism evidently did not regard the doctrine as vital enough to warrant a single section to its exposition, referring to it only incidentally, while in Calvin's 1537 Creed it was not even mentioned. The same tendency to be silent on the doctrine of reprobation is evident in the Scottish Confession of 1560, the Second Helvetic Confession of 1566, the Thirty Nine Articles and the Heidelberg Catechism.*

What then is the central element in Calvin's theology and practise? Some critics, such as Troeltsch, have substantially asserted that a non-religious principle is the essential mark of Calvinism, that the Reformed faith is most clearly distinguished by its moral, social and ethical teachings. In suggestive rather than strictly accurate phraseology Mark Pattison maintained that

* Cp. Foster, "Harvard Theol. Rev." and A. M. Hunter, 292.

for Calvin the Reformation was essentially a renovation of human character, that the Reformer regarded the Church as a society of regenerate men, and in fact that "the moral purification of humanity as the original idea of Christianity is the guiding idea of his system."* It is to be questioned if the Reformer would echo this judgment of himself and his theology. Surely Calvin's frank espousal of a program of moral reformation should not blind us to the fact that Christianity was for him rooted in very definite doctrinal and religious elements.

A somewhat different tack is taken by Fairbairn in his tersely phrased sketch on Calvinism in the Cambridge Modern History. He discovers a more perfect expression of Calvin in his polity than in his system of theology, in his work as a legislator than in his labours as a theologian. "The polity was a deduction from the theology, which may be defined as a science of the divine will, as a moral will, aiming at the complete moralisation of man, whether as a unit or as a society."** In other words God's will is sovereign and this is in effect the central thought in Calvin's scheme of doctrine, finding expression in his polity, in his theory of Church and State and in his activities as legislator, preacher and theologian.

In similar vein, A. M. Hunter, a more recent interpreter, avers that after all Calvinism is not so much a systematic body of doctrine, but that its essence is revealed in that which was Calvin's

* Quoted, Silvester Horne, 4.

** Fairbairn, 366.

chief aim, "the moralisation of all life by religion."* The use of the word "moralisation" by Fairbairn and Hunter is somewhat unfortunate, inasmuch as the term often connotes a certain secularisation of religion which was utterly absent in the case of Calvin, in fact whose very absence was the secret of strength in his Gospel for all life. A subsequent phrase used by Hunter more accurately expresses the central thought of the Reformer in words that Calvin himself might well have spoken: "Religion to Calvin.... was the acceptance of the rule of God over one's whole life. It included dependence upon the will of God and obedience to the will of God - not more the one than the other."**

Men are coming to realise that were much of the fabric of Reformed theology to be rewoven, were certain of its threads even to be discarded, the warp and woof remains intact, and will remain. Unconsciously perchance every school of Calvinism has been dominated by the central principle of Reformed theology and practise, the sovereignty of God, with its corollary, the complete obedience of man to God's will explicit in the Scriptures.*** Calvinism thus issued in something far more enduring than a logical system of theology, a creed, or catechism, and possessed within itself what Foster so aptly phrases a "dynamic of life," something less

* A. M. Hunter, 293.

** Ibid. 293.

*** Foster thus summarises his conclusions: "The one principle always present and emphasised by Calvin and his immediate followers in every creed and working program was the sovereignty of the Almighty, the Eternal, Whose Kingdom men must pray and work to help bring about on earth, Whose 'word of God' must be realised as the law of earthly kingdoms ... This fundamental conviction deemed

tangible to be sure, but strangely reminiscent of that early day when men spoke not of "-ism" or "-anity," but only of The Name and The Way. The Calvinistic Church revived the buoyancy and evangelistic zeal of youthful Christianity; like it, Calvinism was in the truest sense international in spirit; like it, Calvinism dared all for its Christ. Not for centuries had the Church possessed such an esprit de corps.

The sovereignty of an all powerful God; yea, God is sovereign Ruler of the universe, and by His secret will He govern all things so that neither the enmity of devils or men can withstand His counsel, by which even their opposition is made to serve His own ends and to execute His decrees. All events are guided by His secret will. The God of Calvinism is no weakling, no puny God in distress Who has wound up the universe and knows not whither away, Who is bound to be balked in His plans if man does not hurry to His rescue. The central element in Calvinistic doctrine is the conviction that God is actually sovereign, indeed a healthy tonic to the enfeebling anthropocentric philosophy of our day. God is, in the ultimate, independent of man's obedience; the progress of His Kingdom is not solely marked by the ebb and flow of man's efforts. It is His work, man's too, yes, but man's only because it is His, and we are His. The divine initiative is primary. An undiscouraged God, such is the burden of Calvin's teaching. "He

worth fighting for was put in simple concrete form by the citizens of Geneva who disdained the threats of their former sovereign of Savoy, and sent him word: 'For the sovereignty of God and the word of God we will hazard our lives.'" Foster, "Har. Theol. Rev." 6 f.

will not fail nor be discouraged, till He have set justice in the earth."* We who have been stressing overmuch the truth that God works in and through men to accomplish His will need to remember that the final issues of the Kingdom do not rise or fall with our success or failure.

Included in this conviction is Calvin's insistence that no man's life and circumstances are the sport of chance, fate or destiny, but that every condition of life lies under the controlling Providence of a God Who is all powerful, and Whose mind is toward us for good. It is the voice of Paul: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" It is the voice of the Master: "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain."** Upon such passages Calvin loved to dwell in his sermons and commentaries. They were the fort of his strength, the gauge of his endeavours; through them he viewed all life "sub specie aeternitatis."

As a corollary of his teaching regarding the sovereign will of God, Calvin was determined at all costs to guard against the deification or exaltation of the creature. Christ must be recognised as Head of the Church; His rule must on no account be usurped

* Isaiah, xlii, 4.

** Romans viii, 31; John xv, 16. "If our calling is indeed of the Lord, as we firmly believe that it is, the Lord Himself will bestow His blessing, although the whole universe may be opposed to us." - Letters, I, 107. "... it appears that there is nothing which ought more powerfully to kindle in us the desire of a holy and religious life, than when we acknowledge that we owe everything to God, and that we have nothing that is our own; that both the commencement of our salvation, and all the parts which follow from it, flow from His undeserved mercy." Commentaries, "John," xv, 16.

by that of mere man; His word must be acknowledged as the supreme guide in Church and State.

Yet Calvin has much to say of "another will of God, namely, that of which voluntary obedience is the counterpart."* As a corollary of the sovereignty of God he inferred that the duty of man is implicit obedience, submission to God, service for His glory and the good of his fellow-men. With equal zeal he proclaimed that God condescends to work through the agency of man, and that man does have a part in establishing the Kingdom of God on earth. His chief duty is to further this rule of God. It is significant that over the portal of the Institutes is incised the words, "Of The Knowledge of God The Creator," and ^{that} it is asserted that this is the determining factor in man's life; while the closing section is a clarion call to obedience, with the reminder that we are bought with a price and are to serve God, not man. Know God, do His will; such might well serve as a summary of the teaching of the Institutes

Calvinism has put to the fore not what we get, but what we give. Free from the burden of sin, free from all anxious forebodings as to the future, the Calvinist is at liberty to devote himself to the cause of God, to make of his life a representation of what God has done for him. Absolute consecration to the will of God is the keynote of his service.** Of none was this more

* Inst. III, xx, 43.

** "There is neither a prince nor king who can be a Christian, save on this condition, to offer his life and death as an oblation to God." Letters, III, 383.

true than of the Reformer himself, whose very seal, as Hunter reminds us, "symbolised the man and mirrored his life, - a hand stretched out as to One invisible offering a bleeding heart, with the motto, 'I give Thee all; I keep nothing back for myself.'"^{*} Absolute, unequivocal, joyous consecration to the will of God characterised the Reformer himself; little wonder that his was a moral integrity without a scar. In fact, emblazoned upon the pages of Calvinism shine two words, obedience and righteousness. And so, down the corridors of history sounds the noble refrain of Calvinism: "Nostri non sumus, Dei sumus." "The great point, then, is, that we are consecrated and dedicated to God, and, therefore, should not henceforth think, speak, design, or act, without a view to His glory. What He hath made sacred cannot, without signal insult to Him, be applied to profane use. But if we are not our own, but the Lord's, it is plain both what error is to be shunned, and to what end the actions of our lives ought to be directed. We are not our own; therefore, neither is our own reason or will to rule our acts and counsels. We are not our own; therefore, let us not make it our end to seek what may be agreeable to our carnal nature. We are not our own; therefore, as far as possible, let us forget ourselves and the things that are ours. On the other hand, we are God's; let us, therefore, live and die to Him, (Rom. xiv, 8). We are God's; therefore, let His wisdom and will preside over all our actions. We are God's; to Him, then, as the only legitimate end, let every part of our life be directed. O how great the proficiency

* A. M. Hunter, 4 f.

of him who, taught that he is not his own, has withdrawn the dominion and government of himself from his own reason that he may give them to God! For as the surest source of destruction to men is to obey themselves, so the only haven of safety is to have no other will, no other wisdom, that to follow the Lord wherever He leads. Let this, then, be the first step, to abandon ourselves, and devote the whole energy of our minds to the service of God. By service, I mean not only that which consists in verbal obedience, but that by which the mind ... implicitly obeys the call of the Spirit of God Christian philosophy bids her (reason) give place, and yield complete submission to the Holy Spirit, so that the man himself no longer lives, but Christ lives and reigns in him (Gal. ii, 20). Hence follows the other principle, that we are not to seek our own, but the Lord's will, and act with a view to promote His glory. Great is our proficiency, when we faithfully make it our study to obey God and His commandments."* Such a virile piety rather than a system of doctrine was Calvinism's greatest gift to the world. Calvinism is a way of life rather than a body of logical dogma; in the world, but not of the world, rather seeking to overcome the world and bring its every activity under the sway of the will of God.** And this piety the Reformer succeeded in breathing into the new movement.

* Inst. III, vii, 1, 2.

** One cannot but regret that along with this emphasis upon submission to the will of God as expressed in Scripture, Calvin did not give equal stress to Christlikeness of character. Submission to the written word may issue in a slavish legalism, while devotion to a Person casts a new radiance about every act of obedience. It is well to recall Paul's words: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." (Phil. ii, 5.)

The sovereignty of God, the glory of God, the Kingdom of God, are the terms which Calvin places in close juxtaposition. We have noted that the glory of God primarily consists in the expression of His divine sovereignty, that the Kingdom of God is the realm or reign of God, and has existence in so far as men voluntarily submit every action to the will of God. Hence we return to the central conception of the sovereignty of God, with its corollary, the moral obligation of man to grant implicit obedience to the will of God expressed in Scripture, in order that God may be glorified.*

What has been outlined above as the central element of Calvinism is of basic significance for our purpose, for it was exactly this that determined, in fact even constituted his conception of the mission of the Church. Unlike mediaevalism he did not visualise the Church as a benevolent Lady Bountiful dispensing alms to a downtrodden ignorant populace, but as a campaigner in the world for God, a crusader, whose task it is to insure that the will of God contained in Scripture is made man's guide in every sphere of human activity. The Church is the custodian of the divine law, the guide and inspirer of men that they may grant full obedience to that law.

He did not use the phrase, to Christianise the social order by applying the principles of Christ. There is a mechanical, artificial, almost secular connotation in the words. As often used they seem to proceed on the assumption that the Kingdom of God is after all naught but meat and drink, and that if these be provided in

* The interrelation of the preaching of the word, obedience to Christ and the Kingdom is indicated in Calvin's comment on the Great Commission of Mark xvi, 15. "No fixed limits are given them, but the whole world is assigned to be reduced under the obedience

liberal measure the Church has fulfilled its mission. There is something neutral and colourless in much contemporary work for social uplift which fails to recognise that spiritual realities must be the basis of any abiding social reform. There is a use of the term ethical or moral which is almost synonymous with non-religious, which idealises human action, but reduces the work of Christ to the level of example and teaching. To Calvin this would seem inconceivable; to emasculate religion to mere ethics would seem to him the supreme betrayal.

The glory of Calvin is that in the midst of his embracing interest in the social, political and economic spheres, he never lost sight of the specific religious elements which must be the foundation of any enduring social Gospel. Moreover he insisted that such interest is in itself essentially religious, and that a true Reformation means a change of life all along the line in moral and social questions as well as in more distinctly doctrinal elements. Ruffini says of him that "Calvin was a great politico-social reformer, whose conspicuous talents as a juridical organiser were directed specifically towards giving his Church a constitution distinct from that of the State. In his opinion, therefore, the visible Church is instituted not only in order to facilitate the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments, but also for realising the Kingdom of Christ on earth - the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the English Calvinists said with particular pride."* Which is true, except that Calvin normally did

of Christ, that by spreading the Gospel as widely as they could, they might everywhere erect His Kingdom." Inst. IV, iii, 4.

*Ruffini, 261.

not use this terminology, but stressed the aspect of life as a campaign for God, under the rulership of His word.

Romanism had had its social outlook; it had given alms; it had sought to bring all life under the control of God as represented by the hierarchy. Yet the world per se was regarded as essentially God-forsaken and secular, from which the Church carefully separated itself. The Anabaptists likewise all too often sought to withdraw entirely from the life of the world. Lutheranism heralded a new attitude, but as a Church remained submissive so far as the evils of life in the social, political and economic spheres were concerned. But the spirit of the Reformed Church was far different. It did not share Luther's prejudice against the use of outward means, but as a Church insisted that to overcome the world, and bring it into subjection, not to the Church but to the word of God, is its specific task. Here lies the mainspring of a balanced social Gospel. All of life for God! Not merely to apply the principles of Christ, but to bring the world in all its sin, greed, pride and selfishness to the foot of the Cross, to a Person, to Him! To bring every Genevese burgher, shop-keeper, farmer, artisan, magistrate, beggar, refugee, face to face with God, and to insure that a profession of faith in Christ as Saviour was followed by utter yielding to His will! A profession of faith which did not revolutionise a man's life in its every relationship was to Calvin a contradiction in terms. The Senate chamber, the Cathedral, the Academy, the home, the farm, the shop, even the public house, all without exception are to be subject to the will of God explicit in Scripture. Had

not Geneva, gathered in public assembly, vowed to live according to the word of God? It is the business of the Church, the fellowship of believers, not only to proclaim the Gospel, administer the sacraments and exercise discipline, but to relieve the poor, succour the distressed, the unemployed, the sick, to inform the conscience of the State, to train a Christian citizenry, to lead in Christian education, to insure that the State and its every citizen lives up to its solemn vow, in short to bring the Kingdom of God to outer exhibition, to make of Geneva a literal city of God!

By preaching, discipline, prayer, advice, censure and even legislation it would accomplish this end. Social reform became the distinct concern of the Church, and public morals, gambling, prostitution, drinking, unemployment, begging and the like were problems which it honestly faced and sought to solve. It attempted to focus the power of the Christian conscience upon all the forces of evil and to engender in all the principle of stewardship of this world's goods; it viewed the daily task in the light of the purpose of God, and all of these interests it undertook from a distinctly religious, even doctrinal point of view, to bring all life into voluntary subjection to the sovereign God. Christocracy in the Church, Bibliocracy in the State, that the Lord God may actually rule in the Reformed citadel of the Alps! Well may those who profess to be followers of Calvin carefully weigh the significance of this conception.

Nor is this ideal incidental to and dependent upon the existence of a theocratic type of government such as was professed in

Geneva. Even separatism does not free the Calvinistic Church from its claims. Naturally there will not be the same appeal to civil authorities, and it is to be hoped that the Church will manifest a spirit of caution lest in its fervour it mistake its own will for that of its Master, and a befitting reticence when it comes to making ex cathedra pronouncements of detailed regulations for these broader spheres. It should seek to exalt the spirit, not the letter. But the ideal itself remains unimpaired, and in the democracies of a later day the Calvinistic churches have made their influence felt along these same lines, it is to be hoped with more moderation and tolerance but with something of the identical zeal which marked Calvin himself.

And how shall the Church fulfil its mission? Its work is redemptive, when as a fellowship of the elect it offers the means of grace in word and sacrament through which the Spirit of God works to convict men of sin, and to evoke and strengthen faith; its work is informative, as it proclaims the full counsel of God contained in His word; educative and punitive as it exercises discipline and promotes the progressive sanctification of its members. But this is not all. Not only does it seek by such methods to make certain that all who confess Christ show by their lives that they have taken His will as their own, not only does it seek to influence the several spheres of human activity through regenerated personalities, but definitely, consciously, deliberately, as a corporate body, it endeavours to guarantee that the will of God as contained in Scripture is actually the rule and guide by which Genevan political, social, moral and economic life is

governed. It dare not be indifferent; it cannot but take cognizance of these spheres of human activity, inasmuch as they affect the character of men for whom Christ died. It frankly proclaims an all-embracing Gospel.

Evangelicalism might rest complacent, indifferent, limiting its task to reaching individuals and preparing them for the eternal blessedness. Not so the early Reformed Church. Much less will it consider itself as a mere ethical society for mutual self-improvement, whose all-sufficient rule of faith is human reason. Rather it regards itself as an organism and a fellowship existing down through the centuries, possessing as its rule of faith and service, not reason, but the revelation of God's will in Scripture, and its task not only to offer the covenanted means of grace through which God ordinarily works to call and confirm men in the faith, but equally to insure that this revelation is taken by men as their all-sufficient guide in every human relationship. In Calvin's program for the Church there is that sorely needed element which challenges not only the best in man, but the best men to give themselves unreservedly to the task.

When Calvin returned to Geneva from his three years exile in Strassburg, one of his first acts was to ask the Council to engrave the monogram I H S on all public buildings, coins and the flag. If one goes to Geneva to-day one will still see this ancient insignia of the city carved on the organ in the old cathedral of Saint-Pierre, and on the wooden rail at the border of the choir

stalls; and if one walks to the nearby park to view the "Monument International de la Réformation," there on the pavement one will see a sunburst in mosaic with the letters I H S in the center, while above, at the foot of the central group of giant marble figures portraying Farel, Calvin, Beza, and Knox one will again see the monogram so expressive of the Reformer. Like a golden thread it gleams in his life, in the Church which he so passionately loved, and even in the city which he served with such faithfulness. This age old symbol of Christianity is eloquent of the spirit which he insisted must characterise the Church, a spirit which will not rest till it bring all men and all of life into subjection to its Lord and Master. I H S, Jesus! And well might he have added "In Hoc Signo (vinces)". Thus will God's Kingdom come, a Kingdom which, though essentially the work and gift of God, is none the less furthered as the divine will becomes incarnate in the lives of men. And "the kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever!"

Note. - In general, where there are variant spellings, the British form has been preferred, with the exception of such words as practise, offense, defense, etc., where the more usual American spelling has been followed. A small initial letter has been used in the case of "word" and "sacrament." In the paging No. 266 was inadvertently omitted.